DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 699 SO 018 600

AUTHOR Mitchell, Greg; Melville, Keith
TITLE The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security. National Issues Forums.
INSTITUTION Brown Univ., Providence, RI. Center for Foreign Policy Development.; Domestic Policy Association, Dayton, OH.; Public Agenda Foundation, New York, NY.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 47p.; For a teacher's guide, see SO 019 200. Photographs and illustrations may not reproduce well.
AVAILABLE FROM National Issues Forums, 100 Commons Road, Dayton, OH 45459-2777 ($3.00).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Disarmament; *International Relations; *National Defense; *National Security; *Nuclear Warfare; Social Studies; World Problems
IDENTIFIERS Forums; Issue Differentiation; *Nuclear Weapons; *USSR

ABSTRACT

Designed to stimulate thinking about United States-Soviet relationships in terms of nuclear weapons and national security, this document presents ideas and issues that represent differing viewpoints and positions. Chapter 1, "Rethinking the U.S.-Soviet Relationship," considers attempts to achieve true national security, and chapter 2, "Peace through Strength: Regaining the Upper Hand," suggests that the chief threat to the United States is Soviet aggression and that the only method to ensure peace is to increase U.S. military force. Chapter 3, "A Safer Competition: Cooperating on the Nuclear Issues," asserts that the nuclear arms race, not Soviet expansion, is the real threat to U.S. security, while chapter 4, "Common Concerns: Working with the Soviets," indicates that tensions between the superpowers pose the greatest threat to security. Avoiding entangling alliances and a global military presence that heightens the chances of confrontation are the themes of chapter 5, "America on Its Own: Redefining Our Global Commitments." Chapter 6, "Which Direction for Superpower Relations?" suggests that viewpoints about nuclear arms and national security depend upon how individuals assess various risks and dangers. (JHP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Kinghorn
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS

ED292699
SO 018 088

The Superpowers

Nuclear Weapons and National Security

2

In one of his District Court decisions, Learned Hand used a particularly apt phrase to describe a basic precept of democratic government. "Right conclusions," he said, "are more likely to be gathered out of a multitude of tongues...." There is no lack of occasions where experts and elected leaders can discuss public issues and debate "right conclusions." However, there is reason for concern about how and when the public joins in that conversation.

Judge Hand evoked the classical notion of democracy, which assumes that citizens think about public issues, and that their thoughts and feelings make a difference. Yet the assertion that the public ought to have a voice in public matters is often dismissed as well intended but naive. Even commentators who feel that the public *can* have a voice in public affairs frequently point with dismay at what is actually happening. In November 1986, columnist James Reston wrote that "there was general agreement here that... the elections of 1986 were at best a disappointment and at worst a disgrace." The elections were a disappointment because the campaign did little to provoke discussion about critical national issues. "As usual, the people blame the politicians for this state of affairs and with good reason," wrote Reston, "but what of the people themselves? The latest estimate is that three out of five eligible voters didn't bother to go to the polls...."

The Domestic Policy Association (DPA), which sponsors the National Issues Forums, was formed in 1981 by a group of people who share Reston's concern about the nation's political dialogue. The DPA represents the pooled resources of a nationwide network of educational organizations and community groups.

The chief goal of the community Forums that take place under the auspices of the DPA is to stimulate and sustain a certain kind of conversation — a genuinely useful debate that moves beyond the bounds of partisan politics, beyond the airing of grievances to mutually acceptable responses to common problems.

Each year, the convenors of the National Issues Forums choose three issues for discussion. This year's topics have all been prominent in the news. The first of them is US-Soviet relations. What course should we pursue with the Soviets to minimize the risk of nuclear confrontation without jeopardizing national security? The second topic is international trade. What course should the nation take to close a widening trade gap? The third topic is freedom of expression, a concern that is especially pertinent this year as the nation celebrates the bicentennial of the Constitution. Where should the line be drawn that permits certain forms of speech and prohibits others?

The DPA provides short, nonpartisan books about each of the issues addressed in these Forums. The objective of these issue books is to present various points of view and to provide some of the facts needed to understand the issues.

The DPA sponsors an annual series of meetings to convey the results of these Forums to experts and elected officials. Our experience over the past five years has been that leaders *are* interested in your considered judgment about these issues. We have provided two questionnaires in this book, one at the beginning and one at the end. With these, we can gain a better understanding of what leaders are most interested in knowing — how your initial thoughts and feelings may differ from the considered judgment you reach after reading this material and taking part in discussion. So before you begin reading and then after you have attended a Forum, please fill out the questionnaires and then hand them to your Forum moderator or mail them back to us.

Reaching conclusions about what ought to be done about each of these three issues requires something more than sound reasoning or getting the facts. It requires taking into consideration other people's views and working toward a consensus about the common ground. We already know a great deal about how we differ from each other. We need to know more about how and where we can agree. And that, finally, is the goal of these Forums.

More than 100,000 Americans will take part in this, the sixth season of the National Issues Forums. As editors of this series, we are pleased to welcome you to this common effort.

Keith Melville
Greg Mitchell
Editors-in-Chief
National Issues Forums

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS

1. The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security

One of the reasons why people participate in the National Issues Forums is that they want leaders to know how they feel about these issues. The Domestic Policy Association has promised to convey a sense of your thinking on this topic both locally and at the national level. Accordingly, before you read this book or attend a Forum, please fill out this brief questionnaire. We're particularly interested in whether you change your mind once you've learned more and had a chance to think about the issue. After the Forum is over, or after you've read this issue book, we'd like you to fill out another brief questionnaire at the end of the book.

1. Consider the following threats to our security over the next 20 years and rank them as you see their order of importance, with 1 being the most important.

Potential Threat to US Security	RANK (1 to 4)
a. The relentless threat of Soviet expansion and aggression around the world	_____
b. The existence of so many thousands of nuclear weapons in US and Soviet arsenals that either side could destroy the other many times over	_____
c. The continual hostility between the Soviets and the US that prevents collaboration, even in areas of common concern	_____
d. The danger that, because we have pledged to defend so many countries, the US could be drawn into regional conflicts that do not directly affect us	_____

2. How do you feel about each of the following proposals?

Proposal	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
a. The US should strongly oppose Soviet expansion in Third World countries, even if that means increasing the risk of US military involvement overseas	☐	☐	☐
b. The US should reach an agreement with the Soviets to sharply reduce both sides' nuclear arsenals, even if that means risking that the Soviets will cheat	☐	☐	☐
c. The US should seek a more collaborative relationship with the Soviets where there are common concerns, even if that means not building or sharing SDI	☐	☐	☐
d. The US should withdraw its troops from foreign countries and sharply cut defense spending, even if that means risking that the Soviets will expand their influence in the world	☐	☐	☐

3. Which of these age groups are you in?

Under 18 ☐
18-29 ☐
30-44 ☐
45-64 ☐
65 and over ☐

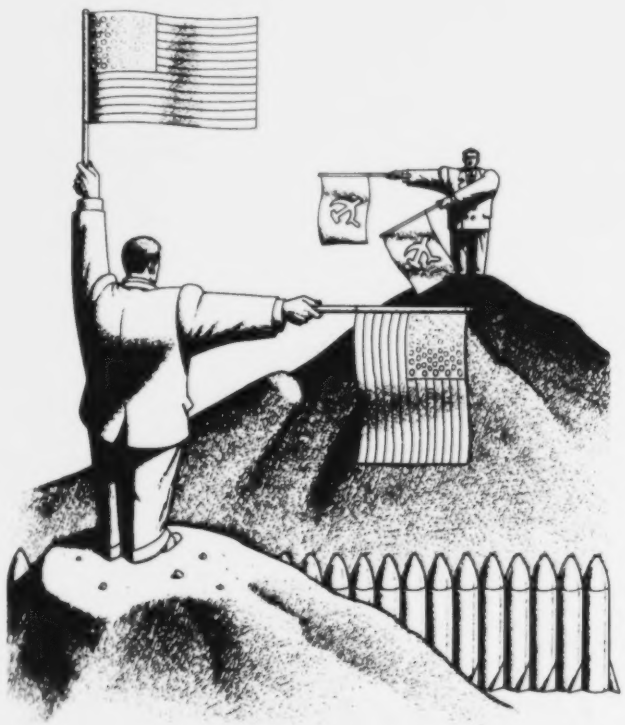
4. Are you a

Man ☐
Woman ☐

5. What is your zip code? _____

So that we can report what you think on this issue to local and national leaders, please hand this questionnaire to the Forum leader at the end of the session, or mail it to National Issues Forums at 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777.

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS



The Superpowers

Nuclear Weapons and National Security

Prepared by the
Public Agenda Foundation

In Collaboration with
The Center for
Foreign Policy Development
At Brown University

Editors-in-Chief: Keith Melville, Greg Mitchell
Consulting Editor: Robert Kingston
Consultants: Mark Garrison, Jan Kalicki, and Richard Smoke
Writers: Greg Mitchell, Keith Melville
Research: Cathryn Harding
Editor: Peg Peterson
Copy Editor: Betty Frecker
Questionnaires: John Doble, Judy Kallick

Design and Production
Director: Robert Daley
Production Manager: George Cavanaugh
Circulation Coordinator: Victoria Simpson
Secretary: Valerie Braum
Cover Illustration: Mirko Ilic
Word Processing: Diann Jutte
Graphic Research: Cathryn Harding

The Domestic Policy Association

The Domestic Policy Association (DPA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization devoted to raising the level of public awareness and discussion about important public issues. It consists of a nationwide network of institutions — colleges and universities, libraries, service clubs, membership groups, and civic organizations — that bring citizens together to discuss public issues. The DPA represents their joint effort to enhance what they already do by working with a common schedule and common materials. In addition to convening meetings each fall in hundreds of communities in every region of the country, the DPA also convenes meetings at which it brings citizens and national leaders together to discuss these issues and the outcome of community Forums.

Each year, participating institutions select the topics that will be discussed in the issue Forums. On behalf of the Domestic Policy Association, the Public Agenda Foundation — a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and education organization that devises and tests new means of taking national issues to the public — prepares issue books and discussion guides for use in these Forums. The Domestic Policy Association welcomes questions about the program, and invites individuals and organizations interested in joining this network to write to: The Domestic Policy Association, 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777.

Copyright © 1987, Domestic Policy Association
Library of Congress Catalog Number 87-071170

Contents

1 **Rethinking the US-Soviet Relationship** 4

The question of what to do about nuclear weapons cannot be divorced from the US-Soviet relationship and our overall national security needs. What is real security, and how can we achieve it?

2 **Peace through Strength: Regaining the Upper Hand** 9

The chief threat to our security is Soviet aggression. The only way to ensure the peace is to bolster our military to deter attack and prevent intimidation.

3 **A Safer Competition: Cooperating on the Nuclear Issue** 16

The immediate threat to our security is the nuclear arms race, not Soviet expansion. While we strike bargains with the Soviets to reduce nuclear arms and the danger that they might be used, we must continue to compete in other ways.

4 **Common Concerns: Working with the Soviets** 22

Tensions between the superpowers pose the greatest threat. The United States is safe only if the Soviets do not feel threatened. Our goal should be to ease tensions through collaboration in areas of mutual concern.

5 **America on Its Own: Redefining Our Global Commitments** 29

We should avoid entangling alliances and a global military presence that heightens the chance of confrontation between the superpowers. America's security would be enhanced by withdrawing our forces abroad and focusing on our own defense.

6 **Which Direction for Superpower Relations?** 36

The debate over nuclear arms and national security comes down to a question of how you assess various risks and their respective dangers.

For Further Reading 39

Acknowledgments 39

Order Form 40

1

Rethinking the US-Soviet Relationship

> **"The question of what to do about nuclear weapons cannot be divorced from the US-Soviet relationship and our overall national security needs. What is real security, and how can we achieve it?"**

Five years ago, fear of nuclear war was rising. Leaders of the two superpowers were exchanging angry rhetoric and both sides started to assemble a new generation of nuclear weapons. Some people were worried that the Soviets had achieved military superiority. Others believed that the nuclear arms race had gone dangerously out of control.

Noting these public concerns, President Reagan continued his military buildup, but also sent negotiators to Geneva to talk to the Soviets about nuclear arms reductions. Although he had labeled the Soviet Union an "evil empire" during his first term, the President met with the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, in 1985. Then, meeting again at Reykjavik in 1986, the two leaders startled the world by discussing a plan to abolish nuclear missiles. Meanwhile, trade and cultural exchanges between the two countries, which had virtually ceased since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, resumed.

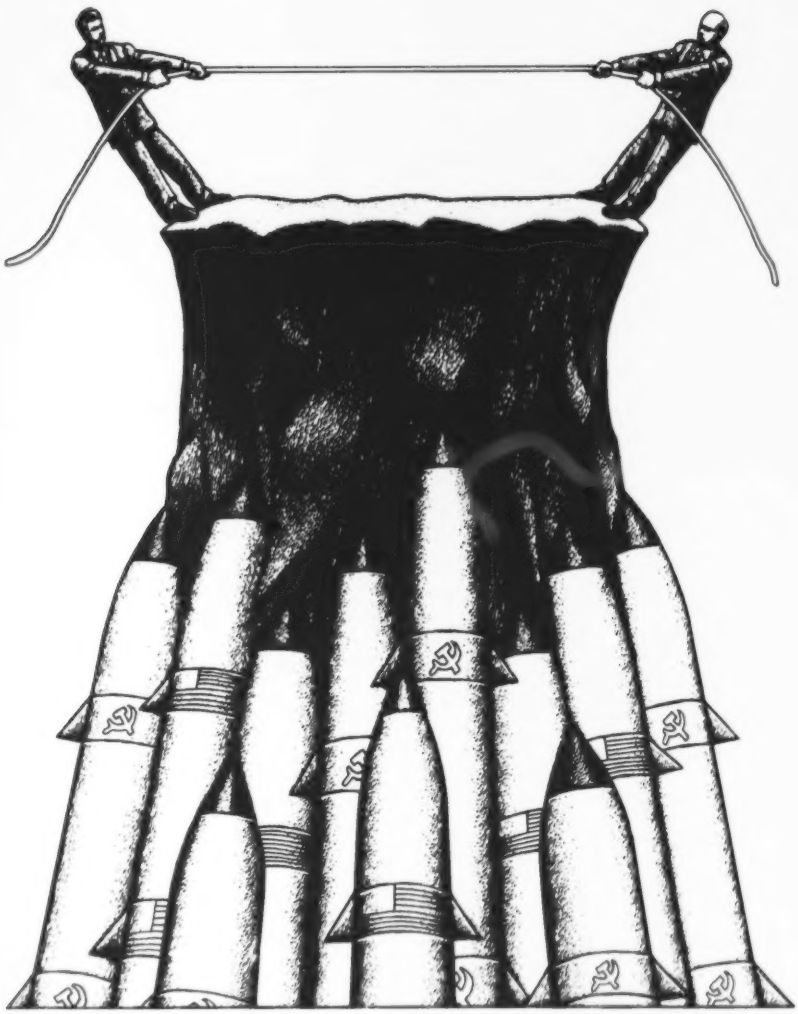
Yet, despite these developments, nuclear anxiety has not entirely abated. America's new MX missile makes some people feel safer and others more fearful. Some worry that nuclear arms talks will not lead to a comprehensive settlement, while others fear that they *will* — and that almost any agreement will lock the US into a disadvantageous position.

In any case, the United States and the Soviet Union remain at odds. Each points at the other thousands of nuclear warheads that are increasingly accurate, deadly, and difficult to detect. Because the new nuclear missiles are capable of reaching their targets so quickly, each side has its missiles on hair-trigger alert. The United States is pressing forward with a controversial space-based defense against nuclear missiles which the Soviets have vowed to counter with new military technologies of their own. Meanwhile, other countries are thought to be building nuclear weapons, heightening the danger of proliferation and nuclear confrontation.

US-Soviet relations are at a stalemate. The superpowers are not at war, yet they are hardly at ease. Both sides continue to prepare for a nuclear war everyone agrees must never be fought. Although Americans are talking, trading, and negotiating with the Soviets, there is lingering fear of the awesome weapons that each side has pointed at its principal adversary.

Some people consider this kind of stalemate to be the best we can hope for, and nothing to be all that concerned about. Others believe that America's "Soviet problem" has to be dealt with forthrightly, before the Soviet Union subverts our way of life or the two sides destroy each other in a mutually suicidal war. It is time, they feel, to consider policy options that look *beyond* the current impasse.

In a useful metaphor, President Reagan has spoken about the need for a "road map," a plan that would allow us to chart the overall direction of our policy. That is what this book seeks to provide, a map that suggests four quite different paths. Each of these paths is advocated by some people as a realistic view



Mirko Ilic

of the dangers we face and a promising plan for enhancing the nation's security.

When the National Issues Forums first took up the nuclear issue in 1983, the discussion was concerned with specific arms policies such as a nuclear buildup or unilateral disarmament, not US-Soviet relations. Two years ago, the Forums turned to a discussion of various facets of the superpower relationship. Nuclear arms policy was only a small part of the debate. This year, acknowledging that defense policy cannot be divorced from the US-Soviet relationship, our approach combines those two concerns.

The Soviet Union is at the center of our security considerations. The Soviets can destroy us and we can destroy them. Yet if we want to talk about national security, it is not sufficient to talk about national defense — about arms and how they will be deployed. Since our security depends upon our relationships, we need to address a broader question: What overall relationship with the Soviet Union can we realistically strive for? What relationship will best serve our security interests — including resistance to Soviet aggression and the avoidance of nuclear war?

Each of the four choices presented for discussion in this book addresses the two inseparable risks: the risk of nuclear war and the risk of Soviet aggression. Each reflects a different set of priorities and a different assessment of the risks we run.

Nuclear War: The Long-Term Perspective

By and large, strategic experts and government policymakers are oriented towards, and they take responsibility for, short-term goals. They respond to crises. They negotiate arms control treaties. They decide which weapons to build. For the most part, they are confident that American and Soviet leaders will function rationally in the foreseeable future, and they believe that nuclear confrontation is therefore an unlikely prospect.

But when most Americans think about the matter, they

© Sygma

President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev emerging from a meeting at Reykjavik, Iceland, in October 1986. They discussed a world free of nuclear weapons before talks broke down over the Star Wars defensive system.

have a different perspective. People who are not professionally engaged as experts or elected officials tend to look at these issues from the perspective of their children and grandchildren. They may agree that today the chance of a nuclear war is slim, and that our military position in relation to the Soviets appears to be relatively stable, but they are nevertheless uneasy about the future. Because they fear that things can easily go wrong, they question the expert view that nuclear war is unlikely ever to occur.

Some people believe that if nuclear arsenals keep growing, nuclear war is inevitable. They have little confidence that fallible national leaders, armed with weapons of immense destructive potential and faced by an ideological foe, will always display wisdom and restraint. Others are not so pessimistic, but they, too, believe that nuclear war must never be fought and cannot be won.

No one wants a nuclear war, but people are divided on the question of nuclear weapons. We can't live comfortably with them, but most people are unprepared to do away with them. Some consider nuclear weapons a curse. Others regard them as the chief reason why there has been no major war since 1945. In either case, nuclear weapons are a fact of life. Even those who would abolish them recognize that there is no immediate alternative to the policy of mutual assured destruction, the threat that we will respond to nuclear attack with massive nuclear retaliation.

However, this acceptance of nuclear arms is clearly conditional. We are resigned to the balance of terror for now. But looking at the long term, what can be done to reduce the nuclear threat without simultaneously making us vulnerable to Soviet attack? Depending on how they assess the various dangers we face, people give quite different answers to that question.

Since 1945, nuclear policy has been consistent in its overall direction but uncertain in its execution from one Administration to another, and even in the same Administration. President Carter, for example, withdrew an arms control treaty that he advocated because the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan caused a drop in public and political support. President Reagan, who denounced the same Salt II treaty, ordered the US to abide by its terms for almost six years.

These repeated fluctuations have led some people to observe that it is not the arms race but the relationship between the superpowers that creates the greatest threat to our security. France and Great Britain, they point out, have sizable nuclear arsenals, but these weapons do not cause us great concern. Soviet weapons, on the other hand, do make us anxious, because the Soviets are our adversaries. So the nuclear problem cannot be divorced from our "Soviet problem."

For years, American policy toward the Soviet Union, like our nuclear policy, has been consistent in its overall purpose but unsteady in its execution. The basic policy has been to contain Soviet power. But relations between the two superpow-

ers have lurched back and forth between threatening gestures and tentative detente. Some maintain that the Reagan administration has ended the unsteadiness. Others argue the contrary, or they predict that policy will shift again in 1989 when a new President takes office.

The American people, too, are divided. Some see the Soviets as "the focus of evil in the modern world," to recall President Reagan's phrase from a few years ago. Others believe that we have blamed the Soviets for too many of the world's problems. Most people, however, are agreed on two points: they regard the Soviet Union as a tough-minded opponent that will press every advantage, and they recognize, sometimes with alarm, that the United States no longer has military superiority over the Soviets.

However, most of us are uncertain about what is required to defend ourselves under these circumstances. What risks, if any, should the United States take to reduce the danger of nuclear war? Can we coexist with the Soviet system without endorsing it? Should we pursue military superiority, trying to hobble the Soviet economy while frustrating their global ambitions?

The uncertainty stems in part from a lack of clarity about the nature and extent of the threat we face. Accordingly, one element of the debate must be a discussion of Soviet motives, policies, and capabilities. What Soviet behavior are we prepared to tolerate, and what is so threatening that we must respond to it? Is the Soviet Union changing under its new leadership, and does that create new opportunities for peaceful coexistence? If the Soviet Union *is* an expansionist empire, why are we even considering limits on our military power? If it is not, why are we pursuing nuclear policies that could result in mutual suicide?

"What overall relationship with the Soviet Union best serves our interests, including resistance to Soviet aggression and avoiding a nuclear war?"

Four Choices

A certain confusion arises from the fact that different people offer very different assessments of the nature of the problem. Some people say that the chief threat to the nation's security is Soviet aggression. To others, the threat is in the very existence of so many nuclear warheads. Proponents of a third position are most concerned about the animosity of the US-Soviet relationship. Advocates of a fourth position are most concerned that America has tried to extend its military presence all over the world, creating a danger that regional conflicts of little significance to us may escalate into superpower confrontation.

Each of these assessments of the problem provides a point of departure for one of our four choices. Each aims for a future in which our country would be more secure from all threats, including the nuclear threat. Each requires us to maintain a strong defense. But each has a different vision of what will make us secure.

The first choice we shall consider sees the Soviets as an unrelenting and implacable foe. It calls for competition with

the Soviets on all fronts until the United States is assured of military superiority and political advantage around the world. Unhampered by arms control agreements, the United States will inevitably forge ahead and the Soviets will no longer represent a credible nuclear threat.

Proponents of our second choice share the belief that Soviet interests are inherently at odds with our own and that we must be ready to counter Soviet aggression at every turn. But advocates of this position do not believe that nuclear superiority is possible or worth the risks both sides run in pursuing it. They argue that our goal should be to reduce both sides' nuclear arsenals as quickly and as far as possible — at least to the level where each side maintains no more weapons than it needs to deter the other from nuclear attack. Their chief goal is to ensure that our ongoing struggle with the Soviets does not escalate into a nuclear confrontation.

Proponents of a third choice agree that the nuclear arms race should be brought under control. But they don't believe that this can happen in an atmosphere of hostility between the superpowers, where each continues to regard the other side's interests as opposed to its own in every respect. In this view, the relationship is what causes the danger, not the weapons. People who share this view conclude that the Soviets are not about to cease being a superpower. Accordingly, they call for the United States and the Soviets to begin to build trust through businesslike cooperation to solve problems that concern both sides, problems that cannot be solved until both societies tackle them together.

"It is time to consider policy options that look beyond the current impasse. This book provides a map that suggests four quite different paths."

Finally, proponents of a fourth choice would reduce US-Soviet tensions by discarding the assumption that the United States must maintain a global role to counter Soviet influence. Supporters of this position say we should gradually withdraw from treaty commitments with our allies, remove our troops and nuclear weapons from overseas, and concentrate on building up our defenses and our economy at home. The United States, as proponents of this view argue, risks nuclear war because of its commitments to defend other nations.

Each of these four choices reflects a faith in our ability to transform existing realities into less threatening ones, and each of them is supported with persuasive arguments. Yet there are also significant disadvantages associated with each approach: economic costs, the risk of war, the risk of losing something we value. In discussing these options, we will examine the costs and trade-offs that are associated with them.

These four perspectives amount to different diagnoses of the problem, different prescriptions for policy. They provide a framework for discussion and debate about the most important issue of our time. Our purpose here is to address these competing choices, and the differing views of the future of the US-Soviet relationship on which they rest.

2

Peace through Strength: Regaining the Upper Hand

Speaking in Orlando, Florida, in 1983, President Reagan urged a group of church leaders not to ignore "the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire." The "evil empire" to which he referred was the Soviet Union. The Soviets' goal, the President said, is still world domination. They bully Eastern Europe, support Marxist insurgencies worldwide, and cheat on arms control treaties. In the President's words, the Soviet Union is nothing less than the "focus of evil in the modern world."

In the several years since the President made those remarks, a new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, has come to power in the Soviet Union and embarked on what appears to be a broad program of reform. Whether or not the Soviet system is capable, in Mr. Gorbachev's words, of "constructive endeavors to improve our country" remains to be seen. In foreign affairs, Mr. Gorbachev has called for new political thinking, and on several occasions he has reiterated a fundamental point on which he and Mr. Reagan agreed at the Geneva summit: that nuclear war cannot be won, and must never be fought. In the brief period since Mr. Gorbachev became leader of the Soviet Union, there have been noticeable changes in Soviet policy.

Is this program of Soviet reform something more than a cosmetic effort to disarm Western critics? Have the Soviet Union's objectives changed under the stewardship of Mikhail Gorbachev? Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, like others who take a grim view of the Soviet Union, doesn't think so. In March of 1987, four years after President Reagan's "evil empire" speech, Mr. Weinberger released the Pentagon's an-

"The chief threat to our security is Soviet aggression. The only way to ensure the peace is to bolster our military to deter attack and prevent intimidation."

Drawing by Lorenz; © 1981, The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

"As I see it, our commitment to the peace process is only credible if our commitment to the war process is credible."

The "Dominant America" Strategy at a Glance

Concept of Security: US security rests on our success in achieving superiority over our main adversary, the Soviet Union.

Advanced Nuclear Weapons: This is essential since we have to keep ahead of the Soviets in all military areas.

Defense against Soviet Missiles: This would be vigorously pursued, no matter what the Soviets say or do, and deployed as soon as it is feasible.

Arms Control Negotiations: They would be held on our terms. Agreements should be signed only if the US does not give up anything needed to achieve superiority.

Our Allies: We should maintain strong alliances and keep American troops and nuclear weapons in Europe and South Korea.

Use of Nuclear Weapons: We would continue to threaten "first-use" of nuclear weapons, if necessary, to stop Soviet non-nuclear aggression in Europe, Korea, and elsewhere.

Intervention Abroad: We would intervene militarily where American interests are at stake, if we are able to apply enough force to succeed.

Central America and Cuba: We would strongly oppose all Soviet-oriented regimes, applying sanctions against Cuba, for example, and backing the Nicaraguan rebels.

Human Rights: We would demand that the Soviets become a less repressive regime at home. We should refuse to deal with them on other key issues until that happens.

Military Spending: It would be at a high level because of increased expenditures on nuclear and conventional forces.

Impact on US Economy: Growing budget deficits, cutbacks in social spending, or tax increases may be necessary to maintain high military spending. On the other hand, high defense spending would produce jobs and technological innovation.

nual assessment of Soviet military strength. Noting that the Soviet military buildup has continued at a rapid pace, Weinberger said that "regardless of who is general secretary of the Soviet Union and how young he is or how healthy he is or how well he dresses, their policy remains exactly the same." The Soviet Union, said Weinberger, will continue to be an implacable foe. Characterizing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" is not just rhetoric, as Weinberger sees it. It is reality. The primary threat to our security is Soviet aggression.

A Clear and Present Danger

From this perspective, the most important thing to recognize about the Soviets is that they have a long-standing commitment to global expansion. Winston Churchill first used the phrase "iron curtain" in 1946 to refer to the Soviet pattern of dominating other countries. It was an apt description, because when the Soviets took control, those countries were effectively cut off from the West.

World War II was hardly over when the Soviets pulled the iron curtain around six Eastern European nations and justified that action as a security measure. Clearly unhappy with Soviet domination, the people of several Eastern European nations have risen up against it. To maintain control, the Soviets have resorted when necessary to armed intervention. This happened in Hungary in 1956, and in Czechoslovakia in 1968. More recently, the Polish Solidarity movement was suppressed by the imposition of martial law in Poland, while Soviet troops stationed in Poland looked on.

People who hold this view of the Soviets feel that it is a dangerous illusion to think that Soviet intentions are likely to change. If the Soviets have resorted mainly to expansion by proxy rather than by invasion with their own troops, this is simply a different means of carrying out their long-standing commitment to global expansion.

In the name of supporting "wars of national liberation," the Soviet Union and its proxies have supplied money, arms, and military training to overthrow non-communist governments in Asia, Africa, and Central America. One Soviet proxy is communist Vietnam, which is currently the dominant power in Southeast Asia. In Africa, Ethiopia and Angola enjoy Soviet and Cuban military support. In the Western Hemisphere, the Soviets gained a foothold in Cuba in the early 1960s, and continue to support that regime at the rate of $11 million a day.

To those who feel that the Soviets are less intent upon expansionism today and less brutal in their methods, proponents of this stern view point to events in Afghanistan. When the Soviets entered that country in 1979, it was on the pretext of "restoring order" out of political turmoil. The Soviets installed a puppet regime. The brutality of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is harsh, some people argue, even by Soviet standards, as witnessed by numerous accounts of atrocities. To those

convinced of the necessity of a relentlessly tough approach to the Soviets, the Soviet Union's geopolitical ambitions and its habit of denying self-determination make its every move a potential threat to American interests.

There is a lesson, they argue, in the events of the past 40 years, one that was first demonstrated in Eastern Europe and more recently demonstrated in Afghanistan. When the iron curtain comes down on a particular country, it does not rise again. Sooner or later, the nations in the Soviet bloc meet the same fate: personal liberties are sharply curtailed and political self-determination is denied. People who take this view feel that this process is already under way in Nicaragua.

As leader of the free world, then, proponents of this approach insist, the United States really has no choice. We *must* actively resist the Soviet Union's aggressive impulses. To resist Soviet domination, we must have the upper hand in the superpower relationship. While taking care to avoid direct military confrontation with the Soviets, we must nonetheless bolster our military capability and at the same time attempt to weaken the Soviet economy. Faced with the threat of an evil and expansionist power, the only way to assure the peace is to maintain our military might so that we deter attack and prevent intimidation.

If the United States set out to achieve superiority over the Soviets, what would be some of the implications? Let's imagine a world, two or three decades from now, in which the US has regained a dominant position.

After a sustained military buildup, the United States is once again the world's strongest power, and the nuclear balance has shifted decidedly in our favor. Unable to keep up with the US because of its failing economic base, the Soviets have just about given up trying. Because the Soviets can no longer afford to pour economic and military assistance into the Third World, Marxist insurgencies have subsided. The Soviets do not dare challenge us anywhere because of our political edge and our tremendous advantage in both offensive and defensive weapons. In a world where we are clearly number one, Soviets leaders do not dare to threaten attack.

This kind of American dominance is within our reach, as advocates of this position see it, not only because our economy is stronger and our technologies more advanced, but also because of the superiority of our values and ideas.

A Realistic View of the Soviets

The case for an aggressive response to the Soviet Union begins with a certain perception of the Soviets. To those who advocate this position, the real question is whether the American people are willing to face the uncomfortable truth about the Soviets, and whether we are prepared to take a realistic path to provide for our nation's security.

They are adamant about two points. First, the Soviets never

Bossu/Sygma

Protecting the West: The United States' mobile Lance missile, deployed in Europe, can carry conventional or nuclear warheads.

"Given the nature of our adversary, we have to accept the fact that the best way to prevent war is to prepare for it."

STAR WARS

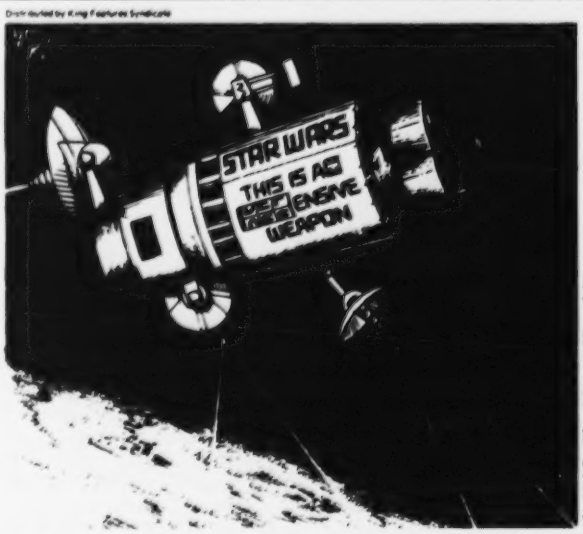
More than four years have passed since President Reagan delivered his so-called "Star Wars" speech on March 23, 1983. In that address, the President called on American scientists to find the means to "render nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete." Reagan said his aim was a defense system that would shoot down Soviet missiles and provide an impenetrable shield to protect the United States and its citizens. To accomplish this objective, Reagan established the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) Organization at the Pentagon to coordinate research and testing.

From the start, Star Wars was controversial. Critics question whether the huge expenditures needed to bring it to fruition — hundreds of billions of dollars — would be worth it. They express fears that it would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty that the United States signed with the Soviet Union in 1972. Critics also fear that it might provoke an arms race with the Soviets in space, and they charge that some of the defensive system's space-based components might be used offensively. The Soviets have made all of these points themselves, and warn that Star Wars would be a stumbling block to negotiating arms control agreements.

But perhaps the most damaging criticism of the SDI concept is voiced by a number of American scientists who claim that it simply would not work — or at least would not work well enough to stop all of the Soviet missiles that might be launched during an attack. If it didn't stop all of the incoming missiles, they reason, SDI would be a failure, for only a handful of Soviet weapons could cause massive damage to American cities.

Some proponents of SDI continue to claim that a so-called "leakproof" shield could be developed after some years of research. Other SDI advocates acknowledge that an impenetrable defense cannot be perfected in the foreseeable future. But, they argue, that is no reason to surrender America's lead in defensive systems over the Soviets. A *limited* defense against Soviet missiles, they say, can be built within the next few years, and it could provide significant protection while work on the "shield" continues.

What this more modest version of SDI would chiefly protect is not US citizens but American missiles. This strategy of defending individual military targets is known as a "point defense." "The most important use of point defense," argues Lt. Col. Simon P. Worden, former assistant director of the SDI Organization, "would be to protect our own ICBM bases. Protecting our missiles enhances their deterrent value, making a Soviet attack much less likely." Worden and other SDI advocates, including Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, call for



© 1985, *The Miami Herald*.

"early deployment" of a limited defensive system by the mid-1990s.

Their argument is that since the technology already exists to provide significant protection for a few of our citizens and most of our missiles, it would be wrong not to provide this protection. It would drastically reduce the chances that the Soviets might ever think they could gain an advantage by attacking us first. It would also allow us to move our nuclear forces off "hair-trigger" alert. At present, if our sensors detected an apparent Soviet attack-in-progress, the President might decide to launch our land-based missiles before the attack was absolutely confirmed. With a defensive system in place, we could afford to wait for confirmation. Finally, those who favor early deployment argue that a limited defense would allow us to intercept a handful of missiles launched accidentally by the Soviets.

Critics of this plan reply that while this point defense is less exotic than a full-scale SDI, it would still not work well. It, too, would rely on complicated computer programs, hundreds of new satellites and "kinetic energy weapons" based in space. Even a limited SDI would cost tens of billions of dollars and could be easily defeated by Soviet countermeasures. Since thousands of nuclear warheads are deployed in American submarines that are basically invulnerable to Soviet attack, we need not worry about the survivability of America's deterrent force.

Proponents of early deployment feel that almost any defense, at reasonable cost, is better than none. "At the moment," Representative Jack Kemp observed recently, "we are completely vulnerable. America lies defenseless. This is not only irrational, it is immoral. We do not need strategic-defense perfection. But we do need to deploy what will work...."

negotiate seriously while they have the upper hand in the arms race. So our best hope for achieving arms reductions eventually is first to arm. Then the Soviets may be convinced that it is in their interest to negotiate seriously to reduce arms.

Second, the Soviets only understand strength. Therefore, the only way to guarantee the nation's security is to maintain a position of unmistakable military superiority. Given the nature of our adversary, we have to accept the fact that the best way to prevent war is to prepare for it.

On one occasion after another, advocates of this approach point out, the Soviets have shown that while they do not challenge strength, they do not hesitate to take advantage of any weakness in their adversary. Consider the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Seeking an advantage, the Soviet Union installed nuclear missiles in Cuba, just 90 miles from our shore. President Kennedy demanded that they be withdrawn. For a week, the two superpowers were at the brink of war over the issue. President Kennedy looked them in the eye — and finally the Soviets blinked. Why did we get our way in that confrontation? As proponents of this view see it, the Soviets gave in because the US had military superiority, and held a clear edge in nuclear weapons.

Let's consider a more recent example of how the Soviets respond to American initiatives. During the 1970s, Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter pursued a policy of "detente" with the Soviet Union. We signed a major arms control treaty with the Soviets, known as SALT I, and negotiated another, SALT II. Our astronauts and their cosmonauts shared a capsule in space. As relations improved, US defense spending declined.

However, as US arms negotiator Paul Nitze points out, during that period the Soviet Union "failed to respond to the more relaxed policies pursued by the United States, and instead moved relentlessly forward." The Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Later they threatened to crush the Polish Solidarity movement by military force. Proponents of this view are convinced that the Soviets cheated on the SALT treaties when they developed a new generation of nuclear weapons, including the enormous SS-18 missile.

But then American policy changed — and when it changed, so did the Soviets. The American military was beefed up through efforts that started in the Carter administration and then accelerated during the Reagan administration. Eventually, Mikhail Gorbachev offered to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan and to reduce troop levels in Europe. The Soviets stopped testing nuclear weapons for 18 months. At the Geneva arms talks the Soviets took a new, more flexible approach and offered important concessions, such as destroying Soviet missiles aimed at European targets.

Advocates of this approach believe that this happened because the US began to act like a tough and relentless adversary of the Soviet Union. If we regain a significant edge over the Soviets in every aspect of the superpower competition, including the nuclear arms race, we can hold the Soviets at bay.

United Features Syndicate, Inc.

Gorbachev: Not what he seems?

A first step in this direction is to recognize — as Soviet leaders do, the advocates say, but as many Americans do not — that the two sides are at war. No common ground or cooperation is possible between the polarities of freedom and tyranny, only unrelenting struggle. We must *choose* superiority. For columnist Norman Podhoretz, it boils down to this question: "Have we lost the will to defend the free world ... against the spread of Communism?"

Building Up, Rolling Back

What, then, is necessary to regain the upper hand over the Soviets? One measure favored by proponents of this view is the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). American scientists have been given the task of finding ways to destroy Soviet nuclear-armed missiles before they reach targets in the United States. Research to develop devices to be tested in outer space is under way. If the tests are successful, defensive systems can be deployed.

The Soviets, however, object to the testing and deployment of such a system. They believe that an SDI system would give the US a decided advantage. (Most people consider the two sides' nuclear arsenals to be roughly equal. So if the US could neutralize even half of the Soviet missiles, that would give us a two-to-one edge.) The Soviets themselves have been conducting research on defensive systems. But they say they do not want to deploy a space-based anti-missile defense, partly because of the huge costs involved.

Deployment of a large-scale defense system would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty that we and the Soviets signed in 1972. But this does not disturb those who advocate a dominant America. If anything, they believe, we have let treaty commitments constrain us too much, reducing our ability to provide for our own defense.

Tass from Sovfoto

The Soviet military displays its might in parade across Moscow's Red Square.

Pursuing SDI is seen by them as a clear step in the direction of military superiority. Especially because we have an edge in high-tech military systems, we should press that advantage by moving ahead. Representative Jack Kemp recently wrote that "the deployment of strategic defenses would do more to shift the course of history in the direction of greater freedom and a more secure peace than all the paper promises made by the Soviet Union in the postwar era."

Another way to put the Soviets at a disadvantage, proponents of this approach suggest, would be to make a more concerted effort to "roll back" communist gains in the Third World, particularly when this happens in our own hemisphere. The most vivid recent example of this policy was the use of American troops on the island of Grenada in 1983. The American invasion removed a Marxist regime that had received considerable Soviet and Cuban aid, and cleared the way for a democratic government to take its place.

To advocates of this approach, it is clear what we should do in Nicaragua, where the Marxist Sandinista regime is opposed by rebel contras who have received funds from the United States. The ruling Sandinista regime has close ties to Cuba and the Soviet Union. Because of that relationship, they say, the regime represents an immediate security threat to the US. This Marxist regime has destabilized Central America, providing it with a "beachhead for communism," as President Reagan described it, right on our continent. From that position, the Soviets can easily export their influence and ideology north and south.

Advocates of a regain-the-upper-hand strategy would provide more military aid to "freedom fighters" wherever they confront Soviet-sponsored forces. They would, for example, provide more assistance to the resistance fighters in Afghanistan who are opposing the Soviet occupation of their country, and to guerillas who are fighting a Marxist government in Angola. Such actions demonstrate our resolve to defend democratic ideals and defeat totalitarian regimes. As President Reagan said about the Nicaraguan rebels: "Our support for the freedom fighters is morally right and intimately linked to our own security. If we fail to meet this obligation, ... we will have sent an unmistakable signal that the greatest power in the world is unwilling and incapable of stopping communist aggression in our own backyard."

Inevitably, arms control and any curtailment of our nuclear arsenals could play only a small part in the effort to gain the upper hand that is advocated here. Of course we should talk to the Soviets across a negotiating table: we might find out that, faced with our overwhelming strength, they would be willing to make more concessions. But we must never give up anything of value. And we must remember that the Soviet negotiators are patient and cynical, and that they represent a nation that has repeatedly cheated on treaties.

"To get good agreements," as former Assistant Secretary of Defense, Richard Perle put it, "you have to be prepared to

resist bad ones." Generally, we should reject gestures which require us to treat our enemies as equals, in favor of attempting to weaken them in every way possible. If that means spending more money on the military, and on nuclear arms, it is money well spent.

Dangerously Misguided

Many people, however, feel that such attempts to gain a strategic edge for America are dangerously misguided. Critics of the "dominant America" approach argue that in a state of all-out political and military competition, with nuclear weapons at the ready, one mistake on either side could unleash nuclear destruction on both. Moreover, if either felt hemmed-in, like a "cornered rat," the losing side might strike out with whatever weapons are at hand — even nuclear weapons. Andrei Sakharov, the dissident Soviet physicist, put it this way in February 1987: "The West must not try to corner the Soviet Union. A cornered nation is always dangerous."

Moreover, critics say, it is naive to think that we can outspend and outbuild the Soviets on the military side. They have repeatedly demonstrated their resolve to match any increase in military spending that we initiate. In terms of their ability to determine how public funds will be used, Soviet leaders, who function in a state-controlled economy, can extract virtually unlimited sacrifice from their people.

Even if we *could* "spend the Soviets into the ground," do we really want to? This strategy would entail enormous and sustained military expenditures, no doubt adding to our budget deficit woes. The price of financing further military buildups might be a seriously weakened American economy. Taxpayers' money, the critics of this first approach argue, would be better spent on alleviating other threats to our well-being, such as the growing trade deficit and environmental hazards.

Other efforts at winning, critics point out, might be self-defeating. Attempts to roll back communist advances in the Third World could lead us into another Vietnam — with all of the debilitating side-effects of such a confrontation. Intervening in areas where our vital interests are not at stake can be destructive to the very values we seek to promote, such as self-determination. As Representative Jim Wright said in congressional debate about appropriations for the contras, "I don't think we have any call to appoint ourselves as God's avenging angels, and reform by force any government with which we disagree."

Finally, building an anti-missile defense system like SDI — if it can be done effectively, which critics doubt — is likely only to inspire the Soviets to deploy even more nuclear arms. After spending tens of billions of dollars — or hundreds of billions, according to some estimates — we might be no more secure than we are today. If the Soviets, in response, built space weapons and threatened to use them against *us*, we would be *less* secure.

"The Soviets never negotiate seriously while they have the upper hand. Our best hope for achieving arms reductions is first to arm."

Prisoners or Protectors?

Those who choose this approach believe that such trade-offs, costs, and risks are well worth it, considering what is at stake. It is the best way, its advocates conclude, to avoid any chance of Soviet domination. Congressman Jack Kemp recently put it like this: "Will we enter the 1990s as helpless prisoners of peril, or as a strong and confident people determined to protect the peace and preserve our freedom?"

Proponents of another view of the US-Soviet relationship agree that the Soviet system and the American system are profoundly at odds. They, too, believe that there is little realistic chance of accommodation with the Soviets. But unlike the supporters of our first choice, they are convinced that the nuclear peril itself, not the threat of Soviet domination, should be regarded as the most immediate threat to our security. Precisely because we and the Soviets are locked in long-term conflict, it is imperative to take immediate steps to reduce the nuclear risk. So let us now look at how advocates of this second perspective think about the Soviets, and what kind of relationship they would seek with them.

3

A Safer Competition: Cooperating on the Nuclear Issue

> **"The immediate threat to our security is the nuclear arms race, not Soviet expansion. While we strike bargains with the Soviets to reduce nuclear arms and the danger that they might be used, we must continue to compete in other ways."**

This position begins with a critique of the one we just examined. Proponents of peace through military strength say that their goal is to preserve our security and reduce the risk of nuclear confrontation. But advocates of this second approach point out that we are now in a paradoxical situation where additional military expenditures make us *less* secure. Increasingly sophisticated weapons only heighten the danger of nuclear confrontation. And a climate of confrontation, they say, increases the chance that war in a place where stakes are high will lead to nuclear catastrophe.

From this point of view, it is wasteful and dangerous to continue to pursue the nuclear arms race in the illusory hope of achieving a lasting advantage. That is what we have been trying to do since the beginning of the nuclear age. We tried to outfox the Soviets with new military technologies, and we tried to overwhelm them with the sheer number of weapons. Neither effort has worked. In the words of Senator Edward Kennedy, "Recent history demonstrates that the Soviets are prepared to do whatever it takes to match us in every stage of the nuclear arms race — step by step, warhead by warhead, missile by missile."

The nuclear arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union has been spiraling upward since the 1950s. We tested a hydrogen bomb in 1952; the Soviets did so in 1953. We developed multiple warheads in 1966, which increased the number of targets a missile can destroy; the Soviets matched that accomplishment within a few years. With the production of long-range cruise missiles in 1982, we announced a new generation of missiles; the Soviets are developing equivalent weapons.

What has been gained from an arms race that has continued for 40 years? The American arsenal now contains roughly 25,000 nuclear warheads; the Soviets have at least the same number in theirs. Most of these devices have a destructive force far greater than the primitive weapons that leveled Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Soviet submarines bearing nuclear weapons cruise our coastlines. If triggered, the missiles they carry would reach their American targets within a matter of minutes. Similarly, American submarines threaten the Soviets.

Because the interval between the launching of a missile and the time it hits has become so brief, both sides have set their nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert, ready to fire. In a crisis, both sides would be tempted to use their weapons before they lose them to enemy attack.

Treat the Symptom First

Like a rising fever, the soaring number of deadly accurate nuclear weapons in the superpower arsenals poses an awesome threat to our security. To be sure, the nuclear peril is viewed by many as a symptom of a deeper problem, the Soviet Union's offensive ideology and aggressive foreign policy. The problem

itself, like a serious long-term illness, must be resolved or at least kept under control. But first, proponents of this second view believe, we must treat the symptom of the nuclear arms race on its own terms, if only to buy time to address the fundamental problem of the Soviet Union's aggressive intentions.

From this perspective, it is the danger of nuclear weapons, not the threat of communism and the Soviet Union's aggressive tendencies — the point of view we explored in the previous chapter — that constitutes the gravest, most immediate threat to our security. Soviet specialist George Kennan has made the point that there is no issue at stake in our relations with the Soviet Union "that could conceivably be worth the cost imposed by nuclear war." Therefore we must take every step possible, working in concert with the Soviets, to significantly reduce the threat of nuclear war, and we must do that as quickly as possible.

To people who hold this view, however, this does not mean that while treating the symptom we would forget the cause, sacrificing our personal values and overall political goals for the sake of nuclear disarmament. We should never entertain what George Kennan once referred to as "fatuous dreams of a happy and chummy collaboration with Moscow." Even while we strike bargains with the Soviets to move nuclear weapons off the playing field, we must compete in other ways — economically, politically, and even militarily — as we are doing now.

Proponents of this second approach believe that the arms race is the only aspect of the US-Soviet relationship where there exists an indisputable, common interest — survival itself. An opportunity exists, therefore, to reach arms agreements with the Soviets far more comprehensive than any achieved so far. We will also have to work with the Soviets to make sure that in places, such as Europe and Korea, where a misstep might lead to nuclear war, everything possible is done to reduce the risk.

In the previous section, we considered what some people think the world would look like, 20 years from now, if the strategy outlined in that section were pursued. By way of comparison, let us now briefly consider the scenario which advocates of this second perspective envision.

In this future, the two sides' nuclear arsenals have been radically reduced and stabilized at a low level, and the weapons that still exist are no longer on hair-trigger alert. Strict verification procedures are in force. American observers regularly inspect Soviet nuclear facilities — and vice versa — and satellites allow surveillance from the skies. Production of advanced nuclear weaponry has been halted and both sides' nuclear arsenals are roughly equal. Nuclear weapons have been removed from potential battlefields overseas and each side retains only enough nuclear weapons to deter a nuclear attack on its allies or itself. At the same time, we will have sought, by mutual agreements, to reduce tensions and troop levels in various "hot spots" around the world, such as Europe.

THE HUMAN RACE

Lou Grant courtesy of *Oakland Tribune*

Yet according to this scenario, the two sides remain antagonists in other respects. The United States is still actively engaged in countering Soviet-sponsored insurgencies around the world. Over time, our advantage in ideas, values, and technology tilts the balance in our favor.

Unlike the view of the future advanced by advocates of a dominant America in the preceding chapter, this vision is worth pursuing, its proponents argue, because its primary aim is to alleviate the nuclear threat sooner, and for certain, rather than, maybe, later. The nuclear threat, they feel, is so menacing to both sides that it requires cooperative efforts to defuse it, even if that means working with a government we detest. Victor Weisskopf, a physicist who worked on America's first atomic bomb in 1945, put it this way recently: "We need the good will of both sides to cure the disease."

The Soviets Recognize Reality

What view of the Soviets informs this vision? Advocates of this approach believe that the Soviets, who are profoundly different from us, nonetheless share our fear of nuclear war. It is in their interest as well as ours to reduce the nuclear threat. Like us, the Soviets are convinced of the superiority of their system and

The "Non-Nuclear Competition" Strategy at a Glance

Concept of Security: The US and the USSR have a common interest in avoiding nuclear war that could destroy them both. In all other respects, we must try to outdistance the Soviets.

Advanced Nuclear Weapons: Development of new weapons would be halted by verifiable agreements between the superpowers.

Defense against Soviet Missiles: This should be regarded as nothing more than a bargaining chip in arms control negotiations. We would pursue SDI only if the Soviets agree to limited defenses on *both* sides.

Arms Control Negotiations: We would press for drastic cuts in both sides' nuclear arsenals, and if necessary give up "Star Wars."

Our Allies: We would maintain strong alliances around the world to contain Soviet expansion.

Use of Nuclear Weapons: We would gradually reduce our reliance on the threat of using nuclear weapons to deter a Soviet non-nuclear attack on our allies.

Intervention Abroad: We would intervene militarily when necessary but we would also work with the Soviets to reduce the risk of superpower conflict in "hot spots" where both sides have vital interests.

Central America and Cuba: We would oppose all Soviet-oriented regimes, using sanctions against Cuba, for example, and backing the Nicaraguan rebels.

Human Rights: We would press the Soviets to ease repression, but not to the point of obstructing reductions in nuclear arms.

Military Spending: It would continue at least at present levels. Spending on conventional weapons and forces might increase to compensate for reductions in nuclear arms.

Impact on US Economy: It would have little effect. A decline in spending and jobs related to the development of nuclear weapons would be offset by increased activity in other types of defensive weapons, including high-technology conventional weapons.

are willing to take certain risks to promote their interests. But nuclear war is not one of those risks.

From this perspective, the Soviets look rather like the foe we observed in the previous section, expansionist and opposed to everything America stands for. But proponents of this view insist that the Soviets are capable of meaningful negotiation to prevent global annihilation.

Those who advocate bilateral measures to reduce the nuclear threat point to precedents for such cooperative ventures between the superpowers, such as the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. The confrontation over the installation of Soviet missiles in Cuba proved that nuclear war was not just a hypothetical possibility. The "unthinkable" might actually happen. Profoundly impressed by the danger that had been so narrowly skirted, leaders of both nations started to think more seriously about how such a situation might be avoided in the future. Not long after, a "hot line" was installed between Moscow and Washington to prevent misunderstandings in times of crisis. Several months later, a limited test ban treaty was agreed to which prohibited above-ground nuclear tests.

At the time of the Cuban crisis, neither side had more than a few hundred nuclear missiles. Since then, the two superpowers have added thousands of highly accurate nuclear weapons to their arsenals. As the arms race has escalated, the common risk that led Kennedy and Khrushchev to back away from the brink of nuclear confrontation in Cuba has increased exponentially.

Advocates of this view agree with Victor Weisskopf's assertion that while we can never be certain that the Soviets sincerely want bilateral agreements to reduce the nuclear danger "to assume that they do not, is the best way to drive them back into their bellicose attitude." In fact, over the past two years, the Soviets have shown signs of wanting to de-escalate the arms race. Starting in August 1985, they stopped testing nuclear weapons completely for 18 months, even though the US continued its testing program. For the first time since the arms race began, the Soviets have said they would agree to on-site inspection of their nuclear facilities by American observers.

A Stable Deterrent, at a Lower Level

What course of action, then, should we pursue? As we saw in the previous section, proponents of that view regard arms control agreements with considerable suspicion. The best way to keep the peace, as they see it, is to remain free to outspend the Soviets, and thus to intimidate them.

From this second perspective, however, the *last* thing we should seek is additional weapons. Nuclear weapons have no use other than to deter a Soviet nuclear strike against us, and we have more than enough weapons to do that job right now. In the words of author Richard Barnet: "There is no good military or strategic argument for making even one more missile

or one more bomb. Indeed, the rush of new weapons (MX, Trident II, SS-24 and SS-25) actually increases the danger of preemptive war. ... Ironically, the growing danger of nuclear war is now coming from the increasingly frenetic efforts to deter it." So this position argues that sharp reductions in nuclear arms must be made to secure the peace.

As a first step, proponents argue, both sides should dramatically scale down their nuclear arsenals to the lowest levels needed to deter attack. This would mean an initial cut on the order of 50 percent, with much deeper reductions to follow. Better a stable deterrent at a lower level than an expanding one whose offensive potential makes the Soviets nervous, say those who advocate this kind of reversal of the arms race.

They also say that this may be a better time than ever to reach an agreement with the Soviets on substantial nuclear reductions. The Soviets, who are so concerned about improving their domestic economy, have much to gain from this approach. Soviet leader Gorbachev has advocated non-nuclear competition. The Soviets, Mr. Gorbachev has said, will continue to compete with the American system. But they wish to do so in a world free of nuclear weapons. One of the advantages this approach holds over the strategy outlined in the previous section, its proponents conclude, is that it is based on something the Soviets have said they would do: give up most of their nuclear weapons if we will do the same.

But since nuclear weapons cannot be disinvented or totally eliminated, we must also reduce the chance that the weapons we retain are ever used. We must, as former Secretary of Defense McNamara put it in 1987, recognize that "nuclear warheads cannot be used as nuclear weapons."

The danger is not farfetched. Currently, we have thousands of nuclear warheads deployed in Europe, and hundreds of others in Korea that could be used in battlefield situations. It is US policy to threaten to use nuclear weapons if Soviet-backed armies should invade Western Europe, South Korea, or the Middle East. That doesn't mean that we would automatically use nuclear weapons to oppose an enemy who is using non-nuclear force against us, but it means that we will do so if necessary to avoid defeat. This policy, which is known as "first-use" policy, has been the bedrock of our defense of our allies for decades.

Critics of this policy feel that its usefulness has passed. It was formulated nearly 40 years ago, when the US held a virtual nuclear monopoly. But now that the Soviets might respond in kind to any use of nuclear weapons, a "limited" nuclear war could quickly escalate into a global exchange and mutual annihilation.

For that reason many argue that we should declare that the United States will never be the first to use nuclear weapons — a policy of "no first use." They believe that we should reduce our reliance on nuclear weapons to defend our allies in Europe and South Korea from conventional (non-nuclear) attack. To do

AP/Wide World Photos

A new round of nuclear arms talks gets under way in Geneva. US head negotiator Max Kampelman, left, gets down to business with Soviet negotiator Viktor Karpov, right.

"Across-the-board cooperation with the Soviets is unrealistic since Soviet interests are inherently at odds with our own. But it is essential to reduce both sides' nuclear arsenals to reduce the likelihood that tensions will tip over into nuclear confrontation."

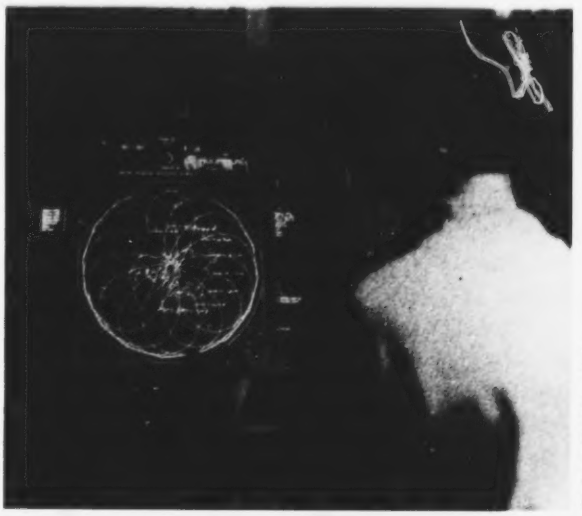
Accidental Nuclear War: "Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control...."

In a world with 50,000 nuclear warheads and a tense superpower relationship, nuclear war could start accidentally. Those who insist that nuclear weapons themselves pose the greatest threat to our security are especially concerned about this possibility. A 1982 report from the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency described the threat in these words: "Despite the most elaborate precautions, it is conceivable that technical malfunction or human failure, a misinterpreted incident or unauthorized action, could trigger a nuclear disaster or nuclear war."

This threat has grown over the years as nuclear forces on both sides have been put on hair-trigger alert. Twenty-five years ago, if the US had ordered its B-52 bombers to strike Moscow, the mission would have taken the better part of a day. Today, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) can reach targets in the Soviet Union in 25 to 30 minutes, and Soviet missiles can reach the US just as quickly. Missiles launched from Soviet submarines off our shorelines can reach their targets in 8 to 13 minutes. As flight time has decreased, the warning time for nuclear attack has dwindled dangerously. An American president and his advisers have only a few minutes to decide whether to launch a retaliatory attack by firing land-based ICBMs before they are destroyed by Soviet missiles.

But what if the "attack" in progress turns out to be a false alarm? From 1977 through 1984 our early warning system gave an average of 2,500 false indications of Soviet missile launches each year, many of which were caused by computer malfunction. (Since 1985, records on false alerts have been classified, so there is no way of knowing if the danger has increased since then.) In most cases, the error was quickly discovered and the alert canceled. But in several instances the error went undiscovered for several crucial minutes. On one occasion, a false warning went uncorrected for six minutes.

Any false alert is potentially very dangerous. To guarantee that most of our missiles are not destroyed in a surprise attack, we might fire them before an attack has been absolutely confirmed. Fred C. Ikle, Undersecretary of Defense in the Reagan administration, told a congressional subcommittee that "A launch-on-warning posture ... [carries] the price of increasing the risk of accidentally unleashing the destruction of our nation." As Ikle warned: "The more we rely on launch on warning (or, for that matter, the more the Soviets do) the greater the risk of accidental nuclear war."



Robert Del Tredici

Watching for signs of a Soviet attack at the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) in Colorado.

Other factors contribute to the increasing danger of accidental nuclear war:

Miscalculation: In a crisis, the United States might start a sequence of actions to increase the readiness of our military forces. The Soviets might interpret such measures as the first signs of preparation for war — and they might go on alert in response. In turn, this would alarm us, leading to new actions, and so on. Fearing the worst, and misreading each other's intentions, both sides might stumble into a war that neither intended.

Unauthorized Use: Only the President has the authority to order the use of most US nuclear forces. Nuclear weapons based on land or in flight are armed with permissive action links, devices that must be unlocked by an electronic code before they can be fired. However, nuclear weapons based on ships or submarines do not have these devices because in time of war, communications between the Pentagon and vessels at sea might be cut off. If communications were interrupted during a crisis, officers might decide to launch nuclear weapons without permission.

Those who worry about accidental nuclear war suggest certain steps that the US and the Soviets should take to reduce the danger, including the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons with short flight times.

that we could build up our conventional armies, and those of our allies, to take over the defensive role now assumed by horrendously destructive nuclear weapons. Or we could negotiate with the Soviets ways to reduce the threat posed by conventional weapons, or that posed by the basic tensions that make war seem possible in several regions.

Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union needs any more nuclear warheads, they say, than are required to deter the other from attack. With, say, 90 percent fewer warheads the nuclear sword would still hang over the world, but by a much thicker thread.

While engaging in such cooperative efforts to reduce the nuclear risk, advocates of this approach believe that the US must nonetheless continue to compete with the Soviets by providing political support and military assistance to anti-communist forces abroad, particularly in Third World areas where the risk of US-Soviet war is low. We should prevent the advance of communism in places such as the Philippines and Central America, help to roll back Soviet and Cuban satellites in Angola and Ethiopia, and provide assistance to Afghan forces who are resisting the Soviets.

With our most dangerous weapons largely sheathed, the US and the USSR could engage in ideological combat with less reason to fear that conflicts might escalate into all-out nuclear war.

How Promising Is It?

While some people are convinced that this is a prudent and realistic way to proceed with the Soviets, this strategy has its critics.

Some people share the conviction that the nuclear peril is a more immediate threat than Soviet aggression, yet they do not agree that this strategy will enhance our security. Since even a handful of nuclear weapons could cause unimaginable destruction, reducing the nuclear arsenals by half does not really reduce the danger of a nuclear holocaust. If we remain at each other's throats in other respects, conflict could always lead to nuclear disaster. The underlying reason for the nuclear danger is the fundamental conflict and tension between the superpowers.

Adopting a policy of "no first use," these critics say, would change nothing. No matter what the current policy is, we are not likely to initiate the use of nuclear weapons unless it is the only way to avoid certain defeat — but in a crisis either side would use nuclear weapons if they saw no alternative.

Other critics who are more skeptical about Soviet intentions fear that cutting back the nuclear arsenal could make us less secure, not more so. However dangerous our stockpile of 25,000 nuclear weapons is, they point out, it has kept the peace for 40 years. Having many more nuclear weapons than we need may not make the world more dangerous than having only a few more than we need. What we want to avoid is having a few less nuclear weapons than we need.

Moreover, the inadvertent effect of cutting back nuclear weapons may be, as defense analyst Edward Luttwak put it, "to make the world safe for the Red Army." If the Soviets no longer had to fear that regional conflicts may lead to nuclear war, they might become more aggressive in what some people feel is a program of world domination. From this perspective, abandoning our first-use policy — the threat of nuclear retaliation if our allies are attacked by conventional forces — amounts to handing the Soviets the advantage. They have an overwhelming edge in conventional arms in Europe: compared to American-backed NATO forces, the Warsaw Pact nations have twice as many aircraft and heavy tanks, three times as much artillery and six times as many surface-to-air missiles. If we want to hold the line against the Soviets without nuclear weapons, we will have to invest far more in conventional arms, and convince our allies to do the same. Critics do not believe that either we or our NATO and Japanese allies are prepared to make the sacrifices required by a stepped-up conventional arms race. And it is naive to think that the Soviets will significantly reduce *their* conventional arms.

One of the serious drawbacks of this approach, as some critics see it, is that it requires us to trust the Soviets. While satellites and on-site inspection offer the appearance of a secure arms verification system, there is really no foolproof way of monitoring, let alone preventing, Soviet arms control treaty violations. In a world in which there are fewer nuclear arms, the Soviets might secretly rearm with advanced weapons. For this reason, a bad deal on bilateral reductions of nuclear weapons could be worse than no deal at all.

What Must Be Done Now

Those who favor the kind of reversal of the nuclear arms race that has been described in this section fear that if we don't act to reduce the nuclear danger, nuclear war is inevitable. Only a policy of non-nuclear competition, they insist, calls for an *immediate* attempt to alleviate the nuclear danger while strongly standing up to the Soviet system — the two things, in their view, that Americans most strongly desire.

But proponents of a third approach make a distinctly different argument. Serious arms reductions will prove impossible or short-lived while there continues to be such intense mistrust and competition between us and the Soviets, they say. In their view, we will never be able to alleviate the nuclear threat until US-Soviet relations are substantially improved. It is the superpower relationship, not nuclear weapons, that represents the most immediate threat. While these people recognize the sharp and perhaps irreconcilable differences in ideology and practice between the two superpowers, they suggest that only in an atmosphere of live-and-let-live, rather than unending hostility, can the nuclear fever cease. It is to this option that we now turn.

Common Concerns: Working with the Soviets

> "Tensions between the superpowers pose the greatest threat. The United States is safe only if the Soviets do not feel threatened. Our goal should be to ease tensions through collaboration in areas of mutual concern."

Recall for a moment what took place in the 1950s when the Chinese communists replaced the Japanese as the new peril across the Pacific. Thousands of American soldiers were killed fighting Chinese troops in Korea. The United States provided military aid to Chiang Kai-shek, who had fled to Taiwan after being defeated by Mao Zedong's forces in the Chinese civil war. Fear of mainland China's expansion into Indochina was high, and this concern triggered our intervention in Vietnam a few years later.

Today we view the Chinese communists in quite a different light. Since the diplomatic initiatives of the Nixon administration in the early 1970s, "Red China" has become, simply, China — not quite a friend but certainly not a foe. It is still a communist nation. Over the past 30 years, it has become a more formidable military power, armed with nuclear weapons. Yet the United States no longer fears China, nor do we oppose it on most fronts. Over time, trade relationships with the Chinese have broadened and the Chinese have modified their Marxist practice. The relationship between China and the United States can be described in a word — businesslike.

In the 1950s, no one could have foreseen the communist Chinese as our partners. Today, it seems equally unlikely that our competition with the Soviet Union could evolve into the kind of pragmatic association we now have with their communist neighbor. But people who hold the view we are now going to consider are convinced that the United States, while remaining militarily strong, can develop the kind of relationship with the Soviet Union that would make the world a safer place.

Detente with a Difference

Throughout the postwar period, the national defense effort has been justified on the grounds that the principal threat to our security comes from Soviet aggression. We have tended to see the problem as a military one with a military solution, and this has resulted in a stream of new weapons that produce neither peace nor security. From the perspective of this third position, our chief concern should be about the US-Soviet relationship itself, and the mutual animosities that fuel the arms race.

The policy choice outlined in this chapter rests upon the conviction that the United States should adopt a live-and-let-live attitude toward the Soviet Union. We should accept that the Soviet system and other Marxist governments around the globe will rise or fall on their own, without our intervention.

But this does not mean that the United States should disengage from the superpower relationship. Rather, proponents of this view feel that we should try to moderate Soviet behavior and work with the Soviets where there is a chance to solve common problems. In a climate of growing cooperation and confidence, the two sides may be able to avoid military confrontation in places like Europe, Central America, and Afghanistan. If we can't achieve mutual confidence by working

Mirko Ilic

on some of the serious problems that affect both nations, we are not likely to agree on significant arms reductions.

Let us consider, as we did in previous sections, what US-Soviet relations would look like in several decades if this were our goal. According to this scenario, by the early part of the next century the cold war will be a thing of the past. American relations with the Soviet Union have become much like this country's relations with China. Both sides retain a substantial number of nuclear weapons — enough so that neither fears being taken advantage of by the other. But because we no longer consider each other implacable enemies, the risk of nuclear war has receded.

While the two superpowers still champion strikingly different social ideals and political systems, they nonetheless cooperate in attempts to solve common problems, such as accidents at nuclear power plants, the spread of nuclear weapons to other nations, the continuing threat of terrorism, and environmental problems. There are active exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge between the superpowers, and trade between the United States and Marxist nations such as Cuba has expanded. Deeply concerned about their mutual security, the US and the USSR are actively engaged in the peaceful settlement of regional disputes.

As proponents of this third view see it, this is the future we should seek with the Soviet Union. Indeed, they argue, this may be an auspicious moment to move in the direction of a more collaborative relationship with the Soviets. Referring to the apparent willingness of Soviet leaders to consider a redefined superpower relationship, West Germany's Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher suggested early in 1987 that a rare opportunity is at hand: "It would be a mistake of historic dimension for the West to let this chance slip just because it cannot escape a way of thinking that invariably expects the worst."

Doing Business with the Soviets

Even before Gorbachev came to power, some experts questioned the assumption that the Soviets were willing to take great risks to achieve world domination. George Kennan, the former Soviet ambassador, remarked a few years ago that he found the prevailing view of the Soviet Union "so far removed from what any sober scrutiny of reality would reveal that it is not only ineffective but dangerous as a guide to political action."

How, then, do advocates of this view regard the Soviets? If you view Soviet leaders as men who remember their nation's history and have a keen sense of the need to defend their home-

The "Superpower Cooperation" Strategy at a Glance

Concept of Security: Real security, including the avoidance of nuclear war, cannot be achieved without an overall improvement in superpower relations. Therefore, we would work together on specific problems like terrorism and nuclear proliferation that are common to both nations.

Advanced Nuclear Weapons: We would maintain sufficient weapons to deter nuclear attack on us or our allies.

Defense against Soviet Missiles: We would seek agreement with the Soviets that both sides build and deploy defenses at the same pace, or not at all.

Arms Control Negotiations: Improved relations now are expected to lead to nuclear arms cuts later. Lack of progress in negotiating comprehensive arms agreements should not keep us from pursuing collaboration in other areas.

Our Allies: We would maintain our alliances while extending cooperative agreements with the Soviets.

Use of Nuclear Weapons: By reducing tensions, we would reduce the risk of war and the need to threaten use of nuclear weapons.

Intervention Abroad: A greater degree of tolerance toward hostile or unfriendly governments is anticipated.

Central America and Cuba: Anticipating businesslike relations with all nations, we would seek a peaceful settlement in Nicaragua and improved relations with Cuba.

Human Rights: The expectation of improved relations with the United States would give the Soviets a stake in improved human rights practices.

Military Spending: It would probably continue at present levels, and gradually decline as military competition with the Soviets declines.

Impact on US Economy: Trade activity would increase because more American goods would be sold to the Soviet Union and to Soviet-bloc nations. Jobs would be lost in the defense industry. But reduced military spending would help to reduce the budget deficit.

land against foreign aggression — as well as real respect for American military power — you are likely to make quite a different diagnosis of the situation from that presented in the two preceding chapters. You will not deny the Soviet military buildup, nor the evidence of Soviet support for Marxist regimes on three continents. But you may attribute less hostile motives to Soviet leaders.

Because of their historic experience, this view notes, the Soviets have reason to fear foreign aggression. They vividly recall the horrors of World War II, when 20 million Soviet lives were lost. Those who stress the defensive goals of Soviet leaders point out that the Soviet Union today is ringed with American bases — not only in Western Europe, but also in Turkey, Korea, and Japan. While American troops have been engaged in Korea and Vietnam, Soviet armies have been used only in the territories that ring the Soviet border.

As Kennan sees it, Soviet leaders are chiefly concerned about "the financial burden which the maintenance of the present bloated arsenals imposes on the Soviet economy, and would like to be relieved of that burden without undue damage to Russia's security and to their own political prestige." That corresponds to what General Secretary Gorbachev has said. On several occasions, he has indicated a desire for more predictable and constructive international relations, and he has said that he would like to scale down the Soviet military commitment.

From this perspective, Soviet leaders are more concerned about bolstering the Soviet economy than about extending their influence abroad. Increasingly, ideology takes a back seat to hardheaded pragmatism. Their primary goals are to avoid losing everything in a nuclear war and to assure their country's security — which includes rebuilding their economy at home.

In his first public speech after his release from exile, Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov declared that it was "in the interest of the West" that Gorbachev's initiatives should succeed and make his country "a more stable partner." To proponents of this third view, that is just what we should seek with the Soviets, a more stable partnership.

When asked about her first meeting with Mr. Gorbachev, British Prime Minister Thatcher replied, "We can do business together." People who share this third view feel that in "doing business" with us, the Soviets may become increasingly dependent on us and interested in maintaining good relations.

Attempting to outspend and outmaneuver the Soviets has not worked, they say. The Soviets have matched us missile-for-missile and they have challenged American interests around the globe. A different approach would be more productive. If we cannot remove the nuclear gun which the Soviets have pointed at us, we can nevertheless make them feel more secure so that the finger on that trigger is steadier.

Proponents of this approach do not argue that the Soviet Union is our moral equal. Nor are they more trusting of the Soviets than those whose views we have already examined.

Few of them would agree with what Mrs. Thatcher said after a recent meeting with Gorbachev, that she would "implicitly accept his word." But they insist that the Soviet Union is here to stay as a superpower. We should concentrate on areas of common concern and remember that neither nation can feel secure as long as the other feels threatened.

Common Concerns

Advocates of this position are convinced that there are certain things that we should *not* do, like trying to gain a military edge over the Soviets. They are also convinced that US-Soviet relations could be markedly improved. "We should not isolate ourselves from Soviet society," as former Senator Charles Mathias wrote, "but should seek instead to engage it in the most varied ways on the widest fronts. By addressing a militaristic society only on the strongest ground it occupies, we limit the influence we can have. By exploring other subjects, even marginal ones, we can reduce some of the tension at the center."

If we attempt to forge a more positive relationship with the Soviets, we must choose cooperative projects carefully, making sure that the Soviets are not exploiting us. Recently, the two sides have been exchanging visits by scientists, physicians, and trade officials, with modest but encouraging results. Officials at the Department of Commerce say that American medical science has benefited from plasma research in the Soviet Union. The National Academy of Sciences is working with its counterpart organization in the Soviet Union in the areas of microbiology, forestry, and computer applications, among others. Secretary of State George Shultz, visiting Moscow to discuss arms agreements in 1987, signed a new agreement for US-Soviet cooperation in space.

How could this cooperative approach ease the superpower conflict and facilitate negotiations for reductions in our nuclear arsenals? We could begin by systematically identifying problems that threaten both societies, say the proponents of this approach, and then work together to solve them. That might improve the quality of life, and even save lives in both countries, while improving the superpower relationship.

Both countries are eager to apply the lessons of the near-meltdown at the Soviet Union's Chernobyl nuclear reactor to improve the safety of nuclear power plants. The United States and the USSR are both concerned about environmental problems such as acid rain, which might be solved by new technologies. Depletion of the ozone layer threatens the Soviet Union as much as it threatens the United States and joint action might be taken to solve the problem.

Of more urgent significance, proponents of a collaborative approach suggest, are joint efforts to keep nations like Libya, Pakistan, and Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Both we and the Soviets already cooperate in trying to control the pro-

Henry Payne. Reprinted from *Princeton Alumni Weekly*.

"The prevailing view of the Soviet Union is 'so far removed from what any sober scrutiny of reality would reveal that it is not only ineffective but dangerous as a guide to political action.' "

—George Kennan

Constructive Contact: Common Problems, Joint Efforts

Cultural and scientific exchanges began to blossom during a period of relatively warm relations between the US and USSR in the 1970s. But most of these programs ended when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Not until 1985 did relations begin to improve. At the Geneva Summit, President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev agreed to renew certain types of exchanges. When Mr. Reagan returned to Washington after that meeting he established a special office to promote private citizen initiatives with the Soviet Union.

Now cooperative efforts are thriving. In 1986, 89 exchange programs sponsored tours to the Soviet Union, almost double the number three years earlier. The intention of some of these programs is simply to let American citizens meet Soviet citizens. Other exchange programs involve technical specialists who are eager to learn what their Soviet counterparts are doing. The Carnegie Corporation and the Soviet Academy of Sciences, for example, exchange computer programmers. An American group called Internews created the first closed-circuit television connection between the US Congress and the Supreme Soviet. The New England Society of Newspaper Editors has held regular meetings with the Soviet Union of Journalists. Official exchanges have also been taking place in the fields of health, artificial heart research, energy, atomic energy, agriculture, and environmental protection, among other fields.

So far, the results have been modest but encouraging. An American pharmaceutical company, for example, is now marketing a drug that helps to prevent cardiac arrest. The drug was developed in the Soviet Union.

Exposing Soviet experts and private citizens to our way of life may have broader repercussions. "Some of the professional exchanges now taking place will influence governments eventually," says Jerry Hough, a Soviet expert at Duke University. Hough attributes the more "Westernized" approach of the Gorbachev regime partly to younger Soviet leaders' exposure to outside influences. He recalls that years ago one of Gorbachev's close advisers spent several months in New York City as part of a student exchange at Columbia University.

Introducing the Soviets to some recent American technological achievements could ease the superpower relationship indirectly. Freeman Dyson, an American physicist who designed nuclear weapons, believes that our technological advantages "give us a uniquely effective means for guiding Soviet policies in directions which we may consider desirable.... Soviet leaders do not always wish to listen to our diplomacy, but they always listen to our technology."

Tiziou/Sygma

Astronaut Thomas Stafford and cosmonaut Aleksey Leonov bring the superpowers together in Apollo/Soyuz spacecraft

The most ambitious joint scientific and technological project currently under consideration is a joint Soviet-American mission to Mars. US Senator Spark Matsunaga of Hawaii, author of a book called *The Mars Project: Journeys Beyond the Cold War*, sponsored a congressional resolution calling on the two countries to initiate discussions for a joint manned mission to Mars.

The two countries teamed up in 1975 when a group of cosmonauts and astronauts met in space as part of the Apollo/Soyuz mission. Advocates of a joint Mars probe believe that such a collaborative venture would vividly illustrate that it is better to cooperate with the Soviets in space than to compete with them.

liferation of nuclear weapons among Third World nations. The danger of nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists, or nations less responsible than the US and the USSR have shown themselves to be, is something that both superpowers should actively address.

In March 1987, the Soviets asked several European governments to cooperate in fighting international terrorism. This was the clearest indication to date that the Soviet Union might seek international cooperation to combat terrorism. Some of these initiatives may work, while others will no doubt end in failure. However, such attempts at cooperation would broaden our relationship with the Soviet Union.

Mutual Security

If our goal is mutual security, we will give up any hope of achieving military superiority over the Soviets. Relations between the superpowers, in this view, will never improve significantly if one side is trying to outgun the other. Therefore, we should abandon the attempt to achieve military superiority over the Soviets, and settle indefinitely for a situation in which neither side has an edge.

Following this approach would mean, for example, abandoning plans for a Star Wars defense against Soviet missiles, unless the Soviets approved it, shared it, or developed their own defensive system at the same time. Negotiations to develop a mutual approach to Star Wars-type defenses and to curb the arms race should continue. But we should not expect to resolve differences quickly. Failure to reach comprehensive agreements, however, must not be allowed to scuttle a new spirit of superpower cooperation.

This collaborative approach to US-Soviet relations also suggests a changed policy in the Third World. Essentially, as advocates of this view see it, we should take a live-and-let-live approach, and stop treating poor countries as pawns in the global struggle between the superpowers. We do not approve of Soviet values and policies, of course, and they do not like ours. But 70 years after Lenin's revolution and some 40 years after the start of the Cold War, the superpowers' global struggle is a standoff. Rather than opposing Soviet-backed regimes wherever they appear, we should instead put our energies into broadcasting a positive image of democracy — and win converts to our values by example.

In this view, by combating new communist governments in the Third World, and by cutting off trade with them — as we have with Cuba — we succeed only in driving them further into the Soviet camp, while we eliminate potentially profitable markets for ourselves. In a live-and-let-live world, they argue, our way will eventually win more followers than theirs.

Proponents insist that a "dual-track" approach of this type entails fewer risks than setting out to negotiate deep cuts in our nuclear forces. From this perspective, the most realistic approach to an improved superpower relationship lies in gradually building a sense of mutual trust.

Too Good to Be True?

As hopeful as it is about the long-term effects of superpower collaboration, this position has its critics. As some people see it, its chief flaw is that it takes Soviet leaders at their word. Despite the rhetoric of cooperation that has become a hallmark of the Gorbachev regime, say critics, the nature and objectives of the Soviet system have not changed. Their goal is still to dominate us, not to achieve mutual security.

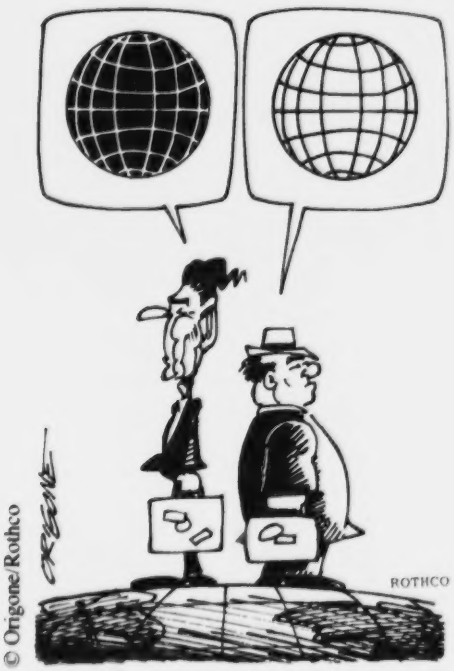
Besides, it may be dangerously shortsighted to launch a new era of collaboration until we have a better sense of whether Mr. Gorbachev's words correspond to what the Soviet government actually does. In a recent piece on prospects for a redefined superpower relationship, columnist Flora Lewis posed two questions: "Even if the Soviet leader is taken at his word, which many Russians do not do, can he deliver? Can he be ousted, and then what would be Soviet policy?"

To illustrate what they regard as flaws in this third perspective, critics point to its implications for the Strategic Defense Initiative. One argument for moving ahead with the SDI is that it is an area in which American scientists and engineers have a clear advantage over the Soviet Union. If we followed this third approach, however, we would either decide to stop further efforts to deploy defensive weapons, or we might share Star Wars with the Soviets, as President Reagan once proposed to do. In either case, we would give up the clear advantage we currently hold, with little prospect of getting anything of equal value in return.

Moreover, the Soviets could learn from scientific and technological exchanges with the United States, and then use that knowledge to improve their military capability — which in turn they could use against us. Under a policy of collaboration with the Soviets, we would risk being duped by the Soviets, and could end up in a disadvantageous position overall.

Critics concede that the businesslike association we now have with China shows the potential of playing down ideological differences, normalizing our relationships with former adversaries, and emphasizing constructive contact in such realms as trade and tourism. But the USSR, they point out, poses far more of a threat. Unlike the Soviets, the Chinese are not arming Cubans and Sandinistas in our own hemisphere. While China is an underdeveloped nation that poses no direct threat to the United States, the Soviet Union is a genuine superpower, armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons. Rather than assuming that Soviet leaders want little more than to protect the USSR from foreign aggressors, we should recognize the Soviet Union as an aggressive, insecure, and often clumsy giant.

Critics of a collaborative approach also fear that adopting a live-and-let-live attitude about Soviet influence in the Third



© Origone/Rothco

"Until we gain more mutual trust by working on serious problems that affect both nations, we will never be able to agree upon significant arms reductions."

World may amount to condemning much of the world to communism. The Soviet system is not our moral equal. Our responsibility as leader of the free world is to continue to oppose oppressive regimes that deny the social and political rights of their citizens.

Risks Worth Taking

Like the advocates of the first two positions we examined, supporters of broader cooperation between the superpowers feel that their approach embodies characteristically American values. It reflects our sense of pragmatism and our ability to set aside hostilities for a greater good. And it recognizes that our own interests are best served by maintaining businesslike relations, even with adversaries.

Advocates of this third approach acknowledge that it involves certain trade-offs, such as giving up the competitive edge we now enjoy in high-technology weapons systems. But, they reply, we can afford to take a few risks because we have a vast military apparatus and a far stronger economy than the Soviets. If we do not encourage a better superpower relationship, the Soviets are unlikely to change.

Americans need to understand, as historian Abbott Gleason wrote in a recent book: "Great powers . . . cannot afford to have relations only with nations whose values are like their own . . . nor can all their allies be congenial. We can and must have relations with some extremely unfriendly and nasty regimes; and we ought to discipline our tendency either to deny their nastiness or to feel that if their culture is inimical to ours we must be enemies across the board."

However, like the first two approaches to US-Soviet relations we examined, the success of this third approach depends upon the Soviets' response. If the most direct route to a safer world is an improved superpower relationship, we can do only so much to improve that relationship. Beyond that, everything depends upon the Soviet response.

But our final choice does not depend upon the Soviet response. It regards the Soviets as having little to do with our real security interests. Its goal is to reduce entangling alliances and concentrate instead on maintaining a strong nuclear deterrent to protect ourselves. This amounts to a unilateral strategy for reducing the threat of superpower confrontations. If we maintain our global military role, its proponents believe, we will never diminish the Soviet threat or the risk of US-Soviet confrontation. Rather, we should scale down our military presence around the world in order to avoid war and build up our economic strength and vitality at home. So let us turn to this last perspective on US-Soviet relations.

5

America on Its Own: Redefining Our Global Commitments

"We should avoid entangling alliances and a global military presence that heightens the chance of confrontation between the superpowers. America's security would be enhanced by withdrawing our forces abroad and focusing on our own defense."

After serving two terms as the new Republic's first President, George Washington, in his farewell address on September 19, 1796, offered advice about what course the nation should take to avoid "the evils of foreign intrigues." Conflicts and controversies abroad, he said, are "essentially foreign to our concerns." The United States is blessed by its geography to be surrounded by two great oceans. "Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation?" he asked. From its detached and distant situation, America might pursue a distinctive course. The United States would be well advised, said Washington, "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world, so far ... as we are at liberty to do it."

For more than a century, Washington's successors heeded that advice, avoiding entangling alliances and military engagements outside the Western Hemisphere. American involvement in World War I was followed by two decades in which the United States acted mainly on its own again. But after World War II broke out and the Japanese attack brought America into it on the Allied side, the United States was thrust into a new role. By the end of the war, America was an undisputed superpower, with an array of international obligations and defense commitments.

The most visible of those commitments to the defense of our allies was the NATO agreement, which was signed in 1949. The continued presence of American troops in Europe was intended to serve, in George Kennan's words, as a "modest shield," a reminder to politically and economically vulnerable European allies that we would not abandon them to Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

Other treaties and defense pacts were signed, too. In 1947, American diplomats signed the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance — the so-called "Rio Treaty" — a pledge of our intention to come to the assistance of most Latin American nations if they are attacked. In 1951, we signed a bilateral treaty with the Philippines, and agreed to the ANZUS Pact, which specified similar obligations toward Australia and New Zealand. Agreements with Asian nations followed, including a bilateral agreement with South Korea in 1953, the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty in 1954, and a defense agreement with Japan in 1960.

As "leader of the free world," a phrase that was repeated so often in the postwar period that it served as an invocation, the United States agreed to more than 50 treaties, most of which implied an American obligation to come to the defense of other nations if attacked. Even in the wake of the Vietnam war, a sobering reminder of what might be required if we intended to carry out the worldwide commitment implied in John Kennedy's promise to "bear any burden ... to assure the ... success of liberty," the United States maintains a military presence in 25 countries.

As a result of treaties and commitments made to friends and allies around the world, the level of peacetime military

The "America on Its Own" Strategy at a Glance

Concept of Security: America's security would no longer be affected by events elsewhere in the world. We would only defend North America. Therefore, Soviet actions would be less important to us.

Advanced Nuclear Weapons: We would maintain, at home and at sea, a nuclear force strong enough to deter nuclear attack.

Defense against Soviet Missiles: The United States would vigorously pursue research and development of SDI and deploy it as soon as it proves to be effective.

Arms Control Negotiations: We would pursue such negotiations only to reduce the number of offensive Soviet weapons, allowing us to reduce the number we need to deter Soviet attack. Otherwise, arms control is not important.

Our Allies: We would gradually withdraw from alliances. Our allies would arrange for their own defense.

Use of Nuclear Weapons: We would no longer be bound to use nuclear weapons or conventional weapons to defend allies overseas against nuclear attack or conventional aggression.

Intervention Abroad: We would not intervene militarily anywhere, unless such intervention was necessary in Canada or Mexico.

Central America and Cuba: Since these countries are close to our borders, US action would be called for only if our own security is threatened.

Human Rights: We would denounce Soviet represssion as an affront to our principles but would take no concrete steps to change that situation.

Military Spending: It would be reduced substantially as our forces, nuclear and conventional, are brought home.

Impact on US Economy: Reduced military spending would help to reduce the budget deficit. Money now spent on high-tech weaponry could be applied to making American industry more competitive. But our declining influence abroad might lead to a cut-off of sources of essential raw material.

preparations has reached wartime dimensions. The Pentagon currently spends more than $200 billion annually to meet American commitments abroad. That represents roughly two-thirds of the total defense budget, and about one-fifth of all federal expenditures.

As proponents of this final view see it, we have little to show for an ambitious commitment to the defense of our allies and the maintenance of peace around the world. Judging by demonstrations protesting the presence of US bases meant to provide for our mutual defense, many of the countries to which we provide military assistance seem not to appreciate our help. In any case, proponents argue, our international role as leader of the free world and keeper of the peace seems not to have convinced our allies to offer much assistance in return. When the Reagan administration ordered an attack on Libya in 1986 as a reply to that country's terrorist activities, several of our European allies would not even allow American jets to use their airspace.

When wars were fought by conventional armies, the security of the United States rested in part on the security of Europe, proponents of this view point out. But in a world of intercontinental and submarine-launched missiles, that kind of buffer no longer has the same significance. The worldwide network of treaty commitments that was erected at great expense as a means of keeping the peace now has quite a different effect. As proponents of this last view see it, America's global military role threatens the nation's security, and heightens the possibility of confrontation between the superpowers. It does this, they say, in two ways: by overtaxing the American economy, and by exposing us to the threat of war — nuclear and conventional — arising out of regional conflicts that are not critical to US interests.

Under these circumstances, advocates of this fourth view conclude that we should cut back our global military role to reduce the danger of conflict abroad, especially the danger of war with the USSR. The United States is a powerful nation that has relatively few vital interests abroad. The best way to maintain our security is to drastically scale down our international role, and to redirect resources to the solution of domestic problems.

This, some people feel, is a far more realistic way to reduce conflict with the Soviets than the one proposed in the previous section. Rather than seeking a better relationship with the Soviet Union while maintaining our global role as leader of the free world, we should heed George Washington's advice about the wisdom of avoiding entangling alliances.

Near the end of America's military involvement in Vietnam, Walter Lippmann assessed America's declining position in the world. "We are a great country," he said, "that overreached itself and is out of breath." If we are to catch our breath, as proponents of this fourth view see it, we must make a realistic assessment of what has changed over the last 40 years, and

Europeans cry
"NO!"
American first-strike weapons on
the doorstep of the Soviet Union
are the most appropriate fuse for
off a nuclear world war.

© Joan Liffin/Archive Pictures Inc.

decide how to relate to the rest of the world under new circumstances.

Let the World Go Its Own Way

Former Pentagon official Earl C. Ravenal advocates a new direction for America's foreign policy. "We should return," Ravenal believes, "to a very pristine notion: that the national security function is to guarantee that no part of the United States is attacked and destroyed by an enemy's forces (whether nuclear or conventional); that our soil is never invaded and occupied by a foreign power... and that American lives and property are not spent except in the obvious and necessary defense of those objectives."

Promising to protect allies around the globe puts us at risk, Ravenal says, because it attaches our national security interests to the interests of other nations. Instead, we should insulate ourselves from conflict abroad, take care of domestic problems and strive for what could be called American independence.

As we have done in previous chapters, let's imagine what things would look like, a few decades from now, if we were to pursue an America-on-its-own strategy. Over the course of several decades, the United States has phased out its treaty commitments outside the North American continent. There are no US troops, bases, or nuclear weapons in other countries. Some of the nations of Western Europe and the Far East may have formed their own alliances to counter Soviet expansionism. Our military forces are much leaner and redesigned to defend only North America. The US maintains a strong nuclear arsenal, but it is designed specifically to deter attack on our country, not to protect others. If research has proved its effectiveness, a defensive system to protect America from Soviet missiles will be in place. Meanwhile, we continue our overseas business and trade practices. With the money the US has saved on military spending abroad, we have improved our economic well-being at home and our ability to compete in foreign markets.

While remaining active in trade and diplomacy, America has given up the political and military role that it played in the postwar generation. But steering clear of permanent alliances does not mean withdrawing from the world. As political scientist Robert W. Tucker observes, this policy signifies nothing more than our "refusal to entertain certain relationships, notably alliances, and to undertake certain actions, notably interventions."

© 1986. The *Miami Herald*

"There are very few Americans, however much they cherish Western Europe, who are actually willing to engage in mutual nuclear annihilation with the Soviet Union in retaliation for non-nuclear Soviet aggression against Western Europe."

—Irving Kristol

Guns and Money

Proponents of a more independent America are concerned about our global role for two reasons. First, it increases our vulnerability to nuclear destruction by involving us directly in the defense of dozens of nations around the world. Because we are obliged by treaties to come to the defense of various nations if they are attacked, regional conflicts in which we have no direct interest may well escalate into superpower conflicts.

Moreover, our global military presence puts a severe strain on America's ability to compete economically with the rest of the world. In recent years, the United States, as we have seen, has spent roughly $200 billion dollars annually to maintain a worldwide military presence. More than 40,000 American troops are stationed in both Japan and South Korea; 300,000 are stationed in Europe. We maintain more than a thousand military or communications facilities in West Germany alone.

Indirectly, the American commitment to maintain a worldwide military presence has hobbled our economy. Because we have shouldered a large part of the cost of their defense, the Japanese have been able to concentrate on foreign trade. To a lesser extent, the same thing has been true of South Korea and West Germany.

As proponents of this view see it, there is no reason to continue the defense pacts that were signed in the immediate post-World War II period. At that time, Japan, South Korea, and West Germany could not afford to defend themselves. Partly because of sales of Honda, Hyundai, and Mercedes automobiles and other products to Americans, those countries can afford to pay for their own defense. If Japan, South Korea, and West Germany were to pay the entire cost of their national defense, the United States would have more resources to devote to economic growth.

In the view of those who advocate sharp reductions in our military presence abroad, American military assistance has enabled our allies to concentrate on building their economic strength and their competitive position in international commerce — while we fall behind in the trade race. At current rates of increase, the US will spend at least two trillion dollars on defense between now and 1995. Under an American disengagement policy, according to one analysis, two-thirds of this cost could be cut.

As advocates of this fourth view see it, America's alliances are now a threat to its security, from an economic and a strategic perspective. American interests would be better served by withdrawing from old commitments and avoiding new ones. As our treaty commitments are scaled down, proponents of this approach conclude, our economic prospects will improve and the threat of nuclear war will diminish.

Sacrificing Boston to Save Bonn

What are the implications of this approach for American defense policy? As a first step, American nuclear weapons would be removed from Europe. Nuclear policy currently rests on the proposition that an American President may order the use of nuclear weapons to repel a non-nuclear attack on one of our allies. Thousands of US nuclear warheads are currently deployed in Europe for just that purpose. Since missiles launched by one superpower are expected to call forth an almost instant response from the other, what concerns critics of first-use policy is its almost unthinkable cost: to come to the defense of Bonn, we might have to sacrifice Boston.

"There are very few Americans, however much they cherish Western Europe," writer Irving Kristol observes, "who are actually willing to engage in mutual nuclear annihilation with the Soviet Union in retaliation for non-nuclear Soviet aggression against Western Europe."

Advocates of this fourth position believe that there is no justification for spending such a large fraction of the US military budget on NATO. It would be in our interest for the defense of Western Europe to become once again primarily a Western European responsibility. Western Europe should build up its conventional arms as the best way of defending itself against the Soviet Union.

Western Europe has a larger population and a stronger economy than the Soviet Union, and it is able to provide for its own security. Although the Soviets have a tremendous advantage in nuclear forces, the several hundred powerful nuclear warheads in French and British arsenals are adequate to destroy much of the Soviet Union — and thus are sufficient to deter Soviet attack in Western Europe.

When American military forces are withdrawn from Western Europe, as proponents of this view see it, the US will be more secure. Even if the Soviets were to attack Western Europe, our nuclear deterrent would keep us safe. No matter what happened, those who favor this policy argue, the Soviets would remain vulnerable to our nuclear weapons. Advocates of the America-on-its-own strategy insist upon maintaining a strong nuclear deterrent, and possibly building an anti-missile defense system. Nuclear weapons are a double-edged sword: they pose a great peril, but they also provide certain protection. Used only as a deterrent against attack on the United States, they promise protection that is relatively risk-free. In any case, the dangers inherent in our first-use policy for the defense of Europe would no longer exist.

Once the United States scales down its worldwide military role, the Soviet Union may regard that as an invitation to expand its influence. But those who favor the America-on-its-own strategy think that this would not pose a threat to our national security. As they see it, the same factors that made American military initiatives in Vietnam so unproductive are likely to limit

Bossu/Sygma

US Armed Forces Abroad

Countries Hosting American Military Installations	
Western & Southern Europe	12
East Asia & the Pacific	5
Africa, Near East, & South Asia	3
Others Western Hemisphere	5
TOTAL	25
United States Troops Abroad	
Western and Southern Europe	349,297
East Asia & the Pacific	129,767
Africa, Near East, & South Asia	14,669
Others Western Hemisphere	18,844
TOTAL	512,577
US Military Expenditures Abroad (Fiscal Year 1985)	
Europe	$129 billion
Asia & Pacific	47 billion
Rapid Deployment Force	59 billion
TOTAL	$235 billion
US Nuclear Warheads Stockpiled Overseas	
West Germany	3,396
United Kingdom	1,268
Italy	549
Turkey	489
Guam	428
Greece	164
South Korea	151
The Netherlands	81
Belgium	25
At sea	1,400
TOTAL	7,951

Sources: *Defense 86*, Department of Defense; Center for Defense Information; Cato Institute; Institute for Policy Studies.

The President's Authority To Declare War

One question raised this year during the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the United States Constitution is whether the President has the authority to order a nuclear strike if the Soviets attack our European allies with conventional forces. The Founding Fathers said the commander-in-chief could take steps to repel surprise attacks against the nation. Yet they limited presidential authority to order an offensive action. Only Congress may declare war.

Those who defend the president's authority to order the first-use of nuclear weapons assert that a nuclear first-strike to repel Soviet aggression would be a *defensive* order, as defined in the Constitution. Consultation with, or approval by, Congress is therefore not required.

But some legal and political experts argue that nuclear first-use amounts to an *escalation* of war, not a defensive measure. Any use of nuclear weapons would amount to a declaration of war — which is the function of Congress, not the President. They maintain, therefore, that the President would breach his constitutional authority if he ordered a nuclear assault without congressional approval.

But if the President's power is limited in this way, there is a practical problem: Under circumstances that require immediate action, how can Congress debate and vote on a nuclear strike quickly enough?

The Federation of American Scientists has offered a kind of compromise: In time of conflict or crisis, the President could not initiate the use of nuclear weapons without consulting with and getting majority approval of a committee comprised of leaders of the House and Senate. Some people oppose this recommendation on the ground that it places too many restraints on the President, and keeps the President from carrying out his mandate to protect the nation's security.

The Constitutional system of checks and balances was designed to prevent any branch of government from gaining too much power. It was designed to ensure that important decisions would benefit from the collective wisdom of Congress and the Executive Branch. In the words of the Federation of American Scientists, responsibility for nuclear escalation is "too great a responsibility for one man alone, or even for one branch of Government."

the Soviets' ability to extend their influence in the Third World. The costs of operating a global military operation now substantially outweigh the benefits. As the Soviet Union has discovered after seven years in Afghanistan, even taking over a neighboring nation requires a costly and debilitating struggle, and one that diverts resources that might better be used to improve the domestic economy.

A central tenet of this last position is that the world has become increasingly resistant to superpower authority and purposes. Those who advocate scaling down the American role around the world point to our failure to moderate the governments of fundamentalist Islamic nations such as Iran, our lack of success in stemming the tide of terrorism, and our inability to find a Middle Eastern peace plan. Even in our own hemisphere, we have not been able to eliminate or even substantially influence Marxist governments in Cuba and Nicaragua. Soviet power is similarly limited. Accordingly, there is little need to impose constraints on Soviet behavior in the Third World, for there are constraints enough as it is.

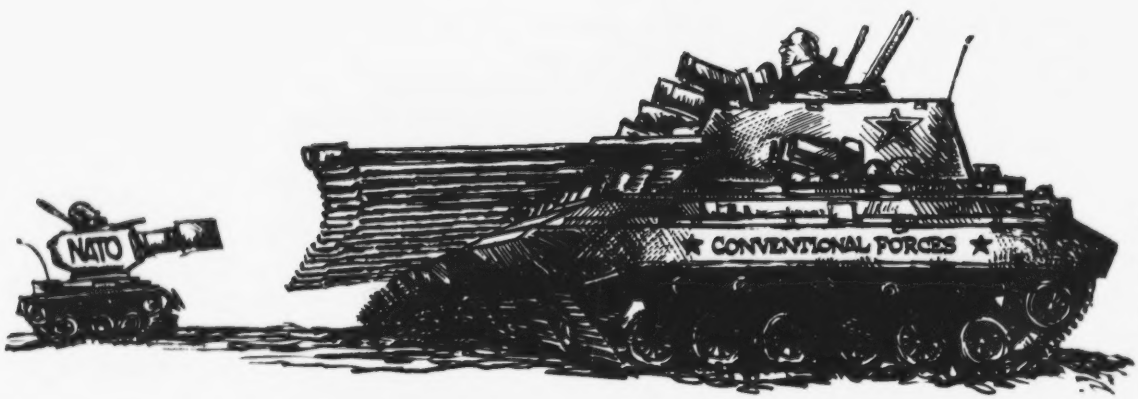
Advocates of sharply curtailed American influence around the world assume that the Soviets, like us, face an uphill battle in spreading their influence. But they presume little more about the nature or intent of Soviet leaders. They do assume, however, that if the Soviets attempt to expand their power, nations that are in closer proximity to the Soviets are in the best position to check their advance. As the United States gradually withdraws from its treaty commitments, new regional alliances are likely to form. Japan, South Korea, and China, for example, could form a formidable military alliance to check Soviet expansionism in that direction.

This view rests upon the conviction, as Richard Barnet puts it, that "the United States can no longer play the dominant role it has been playing for almost 40 years in either security or economic affairs. Its resources are not sufficient. The growing resistance in other nations will not permit it. A community of independent nations sharing responsibility for maintaining peace is a far more effective partner than the string of United States-dominated alliances around the globe... which are made up largely of frustrated allies in Europe and, elsewhere, of surrogates, clients, and sullen dependents. The issue is not isolationism. There are many ways to relate to the outside world besides the one selected 40 years ago, under very different circumstances."

A Question of Values

Not surprisingly, considering the long-standing assumptions it discards about America's role in the world, this view attracts sharp criticism. To some critics, it amounts to the abdication of America's responsibility in the world community. National security doesn't stop at our borders, they say. Didn't we learn anything from World War II?

38



© 1985. The *Miami Herald*

If the United States withdrew its nuclear forces from Europe, could the European allies arm themselves?

Moreover, there are new risks. Withdrawal of America's military force might encourage nuclear proliferation. Various nations who would no longer be protected by our nuclear umbrella, such as Japan and West Germany, might begin building nuclear weapons on their own. And we would be powerless to prevent emerging states, such as Pakistan, Argentina, and Brazil, from doing the same thing.

Foreign trade would be jeopardized as well, since less powerful countries tend to favor nations that offer them military protection. So reductions in our military presence abroad might mean that we would be shut out of important markets and denied vital raw materials. The Soviets could march into the Middle East and deny the West access to oil.

In addition, critics feel that a drastically diminished American military presence abroad may lead to more political instability around the world. It is comforting to assume that the weak will join forces against the strong, and that, when necessary, regional alliances will form to counter Soviet aggression. But something else may happen. Rather than banding together, the nations of Western Europe might make their own separate accommodations with the Soviets. By taking advantage of that situation, the Soviets could dominate Western Europe without ever having to resort to the use of military force.

Finally, critics insist that we should not underestimate the Soviets' expansionist ambitions, nor the resources they are prepared to commit for that purpose. The invasion of Afghanistan has proved to be more difficult and costly than Soviet leaders foresaw. But to a powerful nation intent upon extending its influence, that is a cost it can absorb.

But the most fundamental questions posed by this fourth alternative have to do with American and not Soviet intentions. At the center of the debate over this proposal are convictions about what America represents, and how we can best express our fundamental values. Many people object to the very notion of a neutral America. Our role as leader of the free world imposes an obligation to defend certain values.

To defend the ideals of freedom and democracy, these critics say we must maintain an active role in the world, even if doing so proves to be a costly burden. The United States and the Soviet Union are not moral equivalents. Only American power can guarantee liberty and democracy for much of the world. In the words of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, "What other nation [has] the economic and political power to contain Soviet expansionism, to bring the world at least a modest amount of stability, and to guarantee freedom to those fortunate enough to have achieved it?"

Avoiding entangling alliances may be appropriate for a minor power, which the United States once was. But it is hardly an appropriate course of action for a superpower in the nuclear age.

Those who favor the America-on-its-own strategy don't dispute the claim that our support for freedom would diminish if our worldwide military presence were scaled down. But America would still exert considerable influence as a major economic power. And we would continue to set a moral example for other nations.

The first responsibility of a government, as proponents of this view conclude, is to provide for the common good. America's interests are not well served by spending billions of dollars on a vast system of military assistance to allies around the globe. Our first commitment must be to our own defense, and to the rebuilding of the American economy.

Which Direction for Superpower Relations?

> **"The debate over nuclear arms and national security comes down to a question of how you assess various risks and their respective dangers."**

Forty years ago, as today, the chief American policy issue was how to deal with the Soviet Union. The Western European nations were just beginning to recover from the exertions of a costly war. What worried both sides was the meeting of Soviet and American power in central Europe. Both sides feared that the other would cross the line, and both armed to hold their position.

The question at the time was how America should defend its interests and its allies, and what posture it should take toward the Soviets. In the summer of 1947, these questions were addressed in an extraordinary article in the journal *Foreign Affairs* that stimulated a lively debate, and ultimately affected America's policy. It was a carefully reasoned article called "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," written by George Kennan, an experienced diplomat and foreign policy advisor.

Kennan began by examining Soviet motives and ambitions, especially the deficiencies of the Soviet system which, as he saw it, would eventually weaken that country's potential and its threat to the West. Most of all, Kennan's article was a prescription for policy. Kennan argued that America should "confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world."

Soon after, Walter Lippmann, an influential political commentator, replied with a distinctly different argument. Far from opposing the Soviets at each turn, he argued, the goal of American policy should be to make leaders in the Kremlin feel *less* threatened. As Lippmann saw it, America could not afford to try to contain all of the encroachments of Soviet power. More importantly, the Soviets would more likely do what we wanted them to do — such as withdraw their troops from the Eastern European satellites — if we adopted a more conciliatory view.

As it turned out, Kennan's prescription became policy, the line in Europe held, and in fact communist Yugoslavia fell on the Western side of the line. But the US did not then move from containment to negotiations for mutual withdrawal of US and Soviet forces (as Kennan had intended). The United States and the USSR sought allies and built new weapons. Forty years of this has led to a divided and militarized world, one threatened by the presence of thousands of nuclear warheads. The United States and the USSR have signed several arms control agreements, but progress has been slow while the arms race has escalated.

Today, most people conclude that nuclear arsenals have kept the United States and the USSR from war for 40 years. But simultaneously, they are convinced that those weapons pose a grave threat to our future. There is much talk of redefining national security and reconsidering what our vital interests are now, as compared to what they were in the immediate postwar period.

Yet for all the changes that have taken place over the past 40 years, the overriding question today is still how to deal with

the Soviets. Today's debate over national security echoes some of the concerns that characterized the debate between Kennan and Lippmann.

Fateful Choices

Part of the debate, as we have seen, involves different perceptions of how much enmity there is between the United States and the USSR. To some people — those who take the position we described in Chapter 2 — the differences between the superpowers are absolute and irreconcilable, and one side or the other eventually must back down. A second group, described in Chapter 3, emphasizes that although the differences are great, the superpowers share an overriding concern for reducing the nuclear threat. They believe cooperation is possible in that one respect. Advocates of the third perspective, set out in Chapter 4, don't deny there are ideological differences, but neither do they conclude that America's interests are best served by assuming that the Soviets are implacably opposed to us in every respect. They believe the Soviets and we could significantly improve relations by pragmatic cooperation on many problems. Those who take the final view we examined, in Chapter 5, are less concerned with speculation about the Soviets. Their basic concern is to strengthen America by withdrawing our global military presence, thus avoiding having to confront the Soviets or anyone else unless they attack us directly.

In another respect, the debate concerns the uses and limits of military force. Forty years after Kennan made the case for confronting the Soviets with "unalterable counterforce," the question he raised is still pertinent: Are America's interests well served by doing everything we can to maintain the upper hand? Choices of various kinds need to be made about military matters — about arms control, and new weapons such as the Strategic Defense Initiative, about the first-use policy to counter Soviet aggression abroad, and other matters.

But choices about each of these matters rest upon our answers to more basic questions about the US-Soviet relationship. Should we take immediate steps to reduce the nuclear arsenal, and if so, how is that likely to affect the superpower relationship? Is collaboration with the Soviets in areas of mutual concern a realistic possibility, and can such collaboration reduce tensions between the superpowers? Does it make sense to proceed with the Soviets on the assumption that whatever makes them less secure enhances our own security, or is a strategy of "common security" more prudent? Would America be more or less secure if we scaled down the American military presence abroad, and focused on our internal affairs and our own defense?

These are not technical matters that should be addressed only by experts in defense policy or Soviet studies. They are value questions that every citizen should address. They require a reexamination of who we are as a nation, and what we mean by the phrase "national security."

Minneapolis Star & Tribune

Striking accords to reduce nuclear weapons would, at best, be only a first step.

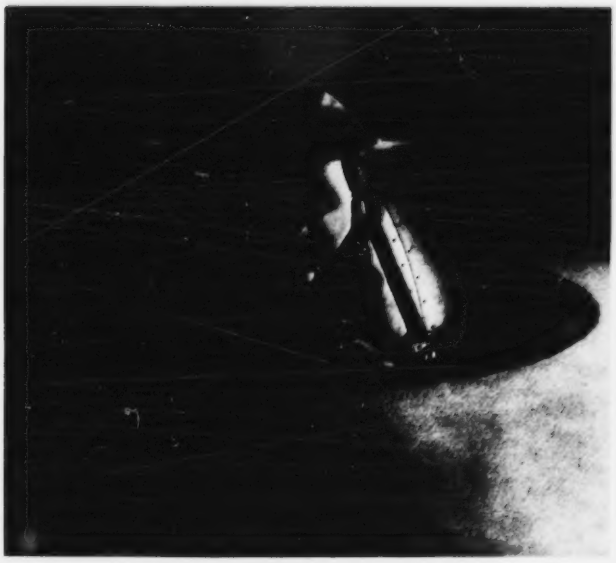
Since each of the strategies proposed here comes at some cost, or requires a substantial trade-off, to pose these questions is also to raise another: What are we willing to sacrifice in order to move toward a position that promises greater security?

Should we, for example, put our highest priority on avoiding nuclear war, even at some cost to other objectives such as promoting freedom and democracy around the world? Should we deal with the Soviet Union as a legitimate nation with equal responsibilities as a superpower, even if by doing so we appear to condone a country whose values are at odds with our own? Is it in our best interest to accept a situation of rough military parity with the Soviets for the forseeable future, even if that tempts them to think that they might gain the upper hand?

To some extent, the answer to these questions depends upon the historical lens through which you view recent events. Some people feel that unless the United States is militarily strong, we run the risk of tempting the Soviets with our weakness and repeating the circumstances that led to World War II. Others are more concerned about avoiding what happened in the summer of 1914, when the great powers drifted into war not because of irreconcilable differences but because no one was able to stop the momentum of increasingly bellicose rhetoric and a massive arms buildup. From this view, we must be careful above all not to invite war by the very steps we take to defend ourselves.

What Is National Security?

In an important respect, the debate over nuclear arms and national security comes down to a question of how you assess various risks and their respective dangers. If you agree with those who believe that Soviet aggression poses the chief threat to our security, it follows that the United States must be prepared to do whatever is necessary to achieve military superiority, even if that means risking an all-out nuclear war.



Greg Ragland

"These are not technical matters that should be addressed only by experts in defense policy or Soviet studies. They are value questions that every citizen should address, which require a reexamination of who we are as a nation and what we mean by the phrase *national security*."

But proponents of the second position take quite a different view of the threat. They point out that the gun that some people keep in their bedside drawer to protect them against intruders may pose a greater threat than any burglar. The very existence of a nuclear arsenal containing over a million times the destructive power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima poses a greater danger than the foreign aggressors it is supposed to protect us against. Therefore, they conclude, we must take immediate steps to reduce the nuclear risk, even if that makes conventional warfare or Soviet adventurism in the Third World more probable.

In emphasizing the adversary relationship as the source of the problem, advocates of the third position hold quite a different view of national security. In their view, we should take off the ideological blinders that cause us to regard Soviet interests as totally opposed to our own, and we should actively seek areas of mutual concern where we might collaborate with the Soviets. From this view, security is best achieved not by military posturing but by taking positive steps toward common security, even at the risk of being "snookered" by the Soviets.

Advocates of the fourth view we considered have a different view of national security. Our habit of defining national security in military terms, as they see it, causes us to overlook other factors that enhance the nation's security, particularly our economic strength. We have no moral responsibility, as they see it, to maintain a worldwide military presence. In fact, we are less likely to be drawn into war without it. So, they conclude, America's security would be enhanced by withdrawing our forces and focusing on our own defense, even if that means leaving our friends around the world to fend for themselves.

A reassessment of the direction in which we would like the US-Soviet relationship to be heading is a particularly urgent task today because of the uneasy truce that currently exists, and the uncertain negotiations that are taking place. In our global political relations, in our trade relations, and most of all in our military preparations, there are critical choices to be made about how the United States should relate to its principal adversary.

In a democracy, the kind of heightened public concern that surrounds this issue can be either good or bad. Public involvement could exert a negative effect if it encourages demagoguery on this, the most fateful issue of our time. If people do not have an opportunity to consider options and weigh their merits, they may overreact and support action for its own sake.

If, on the other hand, through dialogue and debate, Americans consider these various choices for the superpower relationship and weigh their pros and cons, public discussion could become a powerful and constructive force in reducing the risk of nuclear war.

For Further Reading

A hard-line perspective on Soviet-American relations is reflected in *Survival Is Not Enough: Soviet Realities and America's Future* by Richard Pipes (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), *A Strategy for Peace Through Strength* by The American Security Council Foundation (Boston, VA: 1984) and *Nuclear Deterrence in U.S.-Soviet Relations* by Keith B. Payne (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982). For a critical examination of US policy toward the Soviet Union, see *The Nuclear Delusion: Soviet-American Relations in the Atomic Age* by George F. Kennan (New York: Pantheon, 1982) and *Sovieticus: American Perceptions and Soviet Realities* by Stephen F. Cohen (New York: Norton, 1985). For a definitive statement of the Soviet perspective, see *The Soviet Viewpoint* by Georgi Arbatov and Willem Oltmans (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1983).

Three accounts of contemporary life in the Soviet Union written by prominent American journalists once stationed there are *The Russians* by Hedrick Smith (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co., 1976), *Russia: The People and the Power* by Robert G. Kaiser (New York: Atheneum, 1976) and *Russia: Broken Idols, Solemn Dreams* by David K. Shipler (New York: Times Books, 1983).

For views of how the US might withdraw from its commitments abroad, see *A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise?* by Robert W. Tucker (New York: Universe Books, 1972) and *Defining Defense* by Earl C. Ravenal (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1984).

Acknowledgments

Many people participated in the process of deciding upon this year's topics, discussing how they should be approached, preparing the materials, and reviewing the content. Once again this year, David Mathews and Daniel Yankelovich provided both guidance and support.

In important respects, this book draws upon a framework of choices that has been developed by a project on "The Public, the Soviets and Nuclear Arms Policy," which is being carried out jointly by the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University and the Public Agenda Foundation. For their assistance in developing the framework and arguments presented in this book, we are indebted to Mark Garrison, Jan Kalicki, Richard Smoke, and staff at the Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University; Phil Stewart at the Ohio State University; Robert Kingston, John Doble, Jean Johnson, and Jeffrey Tuchman at the Public Agenda Foundation; Arthur Berney at the Boston College Law School; Lee Feinstein at New York University's Center for War, Peace and the News Media; Steve Kosiak; Julie Morrissey; and Kurt Campbell.

ORDER FORM

The following materials may be ordered for use with the 1987-1988 Forums. Specify quantities for each item, fill in complete mailing address, and enclose check payable to: National Issues Forums. Orders of less than $25.00 must be paid in advance.

Quantities	Titles	Unit Cost	Total
	Issue Books		
_____	The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security	$3.00	_____
_____	The Trade Gap: Regaining the Competitive Edge	$3.00	_____
_____	Freedom of Speech: Where to Draw the Line	$3.00	_____
_____	Crime: What We Fear, What Can Be Done	$3.00	_____
_____	Immigration: What We Promised, Where to Draw the Line	$3.00	_____
_____	The Farm Crisis: Who's in Trouble, How to Respond	$3.00	_____
_____	Welfare: Who Should Be Entitled to Public Help?	$3.00	_____
_____	Taxes: Who Should Pay and Why?	$3.00	_____
_____	The Soviets: What Is the Conflict About?	$3.00	_____
_____	The Soaring Cost of Health Care	$3.00	_____
_____	Priorities for the Nation's Schools	$3.00	_____
_____	The Deficit and the Federal Budget	$3.00	_____
	Abridged Editions		
_____	The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security	$3.00	_____
_____	The Trade Gap: Regaining the Competitive Edge	$3.00	_____
_____	Freedom of Speech: Where to Draw the Line	$3.00	_____
_____	Crime: What We Fear, What Can Be Done	$3.00	_____
_____	Immigration: What We Promised, Where to Draw the Line	$3.00	_____
_____	The Farm Crisis: Who's in Trouble, How to Respond	$3.00	_____
_____	Welfare: Who Should Receive Benefits? (Revised 1987)	$3.00	_____
_____	Taxes: Who Should Pay and Why?	$3.00	_____
_____	The Soviets: What Is the Conflict About?	$3.00	_____
	Audiocassettes (Each 30-minute cassette summarizes the issue and the choices through narrative and interviews with specialists and the public.)		
_____	The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security	$3.00	_____
_____	The Trade Gap: Regaining the Competitive Edge	$3.00	_____
_____	Freedom of Speech: Where to Draw the Line	$3.00	_____
_____	All three issues on one cassette	$6.00	_____
_____	Crime: What We Fear, What Can Be Done	$3.00	_____
_____	Immigration: What We Promised, Where to Draw the Line	$3.00	_____
_____	The Farm Crisis: Who's in Trouble, How to Respond	$3.00	_____
_____	All three issues on one cassette	$6.00	_____
	Videocassettes (All three issues on one tape.)		
_____	The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security The Trade Gap: Regaining the Competitive Edge Freedom of Speech: Where to Draw the Line	VHS $30.00 U-Matic $35.00	_____
_____	Crime: What We Fear, What Can Be Done Immigration: What We Promised, Where to Draw the Line The Farm Crisis: Who's in Trouble, How to Respond	VHS $30.00 U-Matic $35.00	_____
_____	Welfare: Who Should Be Entitled to Public Help? Taxes: Who Should Pay and Why? The Soviets: What Is the Conflict About?	VHS $30.00 U-Matic $35.00	_____

SEND MATERIALS TO:

_____ (Name)

_____ (Title)

_____ (Organization)

_____ (Street Address)

_____ (City, State, Zip)

_____ (Telephone-Please begin with Area Code)

Total Purchase	$ _____
Ohio Residents Add Applicable Sales Tax	$ _____
Shipping (10% of total purchase)	$ _____
TOTAL	$ _____

MAIL ORDERS TO:

National Issues Forums
100 Commons Road
Dayton, OH 45459-2777
Telephone 1-800-433-7834
In Ohio 1-800-433-4819

NATIONAL ISSUES FORUMS

2. The Superpowers: Nuclear Weapons and National Security

Now that you've had a chance to read the book or attend the discussion, we'd like to know what you think about this issue. Your opinions, along with those of thousands of others who participated in this year's Forums, will be reflected in a summary report prepared for elected officials and policymakers working in this area. Since we're interested in how you may have changed your mind about this issue, some questions are the same as those you answered earlier.

1. Consider the following threats to our security and rank them as you see their order of importance, with 1 being the most important.

Potential Threat to US Security	RANK (1 to 4)
a. The relentless threat of Soviet expansion and aggression around the world	_____
b. The existence of so many thousands of nuclear weapons in US and Soviet arsenals that either side could destroy the other many times over	_____
c. The continual hostility between the Soviets and the US that prevents collaboration even on areas of common concern	_____
d. The danger that, because we have pledged to defend so many countries, the US could be drawn into regional conflicts that do not directly affect us	_____

2. How do you feel about each of the following proposals?

Proposal	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
a. The US should strongly oppose Soviet expansion in Third World countries, even if that means increasing the risk of US military involvement overseas	☐	☐	☐
b. The US should reach an agreement with the Soviets to sharply reduce both sides' nuclear arsenals, even if that means risking that the Soviets will cheat	☐	☐	☐
c. The US should seek a more collaborative relationship with the Soviets where there are common concerns, even if that means not building or sharing SDI	☐	☐	☐
d. The US should withdraw its troops from foreign countries and sharply cut defense spending, even if that means risking that the Soviets will expand their influence in the world	☐	☐	☐

3. Here are four views of the Soviet Union. For each, indicate whether you agree with it or not.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
a. The Soviet Union is trying to dominate the world; they want every country to be communist and will not stop trying to achieve that goal, no matter what they say	☐	☐	☐
b. Even though they will never be our friends, the Soviets sincerely want to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the superpower arsenals because the one thing they don't want is a nuclear war	☐	☐	☐

(over)

(Question 3 Continued)	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
c. In the foreseeable future, the Soviets are likely to become more like the Chinese — not our "friends" but not our enemies either: people with whom we have a businesslike relationship	☐	☐	☐
d. The Soviets are not really much of a threat to the US and we should stop worrying about them and focus on problems here in the United States	☐	☐	☐

4. Here are some proposals about the nation's defense. For each, indicate whether you favor it or not.

Proposal	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
a. Build and deploy a defensive shield in space (SDI), even if that means giving up the chance to negotiate comprehensive nuclear arms reductions with the Soviet Union	☐	☐	☐
b. Provide military aid to anti-communist groups and governments, even if that means supporting dictators and others who do not believe in democracy	☐	☐	☐
c. Jointly develop SDI with the Soviets, even if that means allowing them access to some of our most advanced high technology and giving up our lead in this area	☐	☐	☐
d. Withdraw from our treaty commitments and bring home our soldiers stationed overseas, even if that means risking that Soviet influence will expand worldwide	☐	☐	☐
e. Recognize Cuba and seek trade relations with it, even if that means strengthening and legitimizing a communist government	☐	☐	☐

5. Which of these age groups are you in?

Under 18 ☐
18-29 ☐
30-44 ☐
45-64 ☐
65 and over ☐

6. Are you a

Man ☐
Woman ☐

7. What is your zip code? _____

8. We'd like to know whether, after reading this book and attending a Forum, you changed your mind about this issue. How, if at all, did you change your mind?

9. If there were just one message you could send to elected leaders on this topic, what would it be?

Please hand this questionnaire to the Forum leader at the end of the session, or mail it to National Issues Forums at 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777.

"I know no safe
depository of the
ultimate powers
of the society but the
people themselves;
and if we think
them not enlightened
enough to exercise
their control with a
wholesome discretion,
the remedy is not
to take it
from them, but to
inform their discretion
by education."

Th. Jefferson